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Dungeons & Dragons

SPECIAL 29TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Dragon®

ISSUE 332 · JUNE 2005

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101 USES FOR A DEAD DRAGON

EBERRON'S CULT OF THE DRAGON BELOW

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(ECOLOGY OF THE KOBOLD)

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Dragon

VOL. XXX NUMBER 1

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Dragon® (USPS 318-790) is published monthly by Paizo Publishing, LLC, 2700 Richards Road, Suite 201 Bellevue, WA 98005-4200, United States of America. (ISSN# 1062-2101) Periodicals Postage Paid at Bellevue, WA, and at additional mailing offices.

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BACK ISSUES: **paizo.com/dragon** or call (425) 289-0060.

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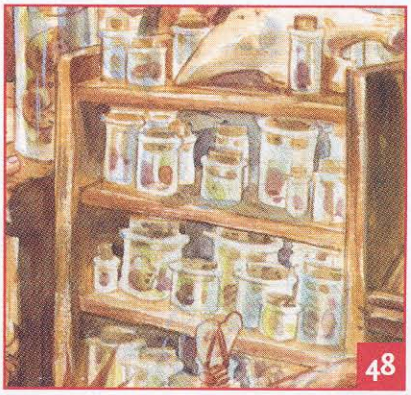

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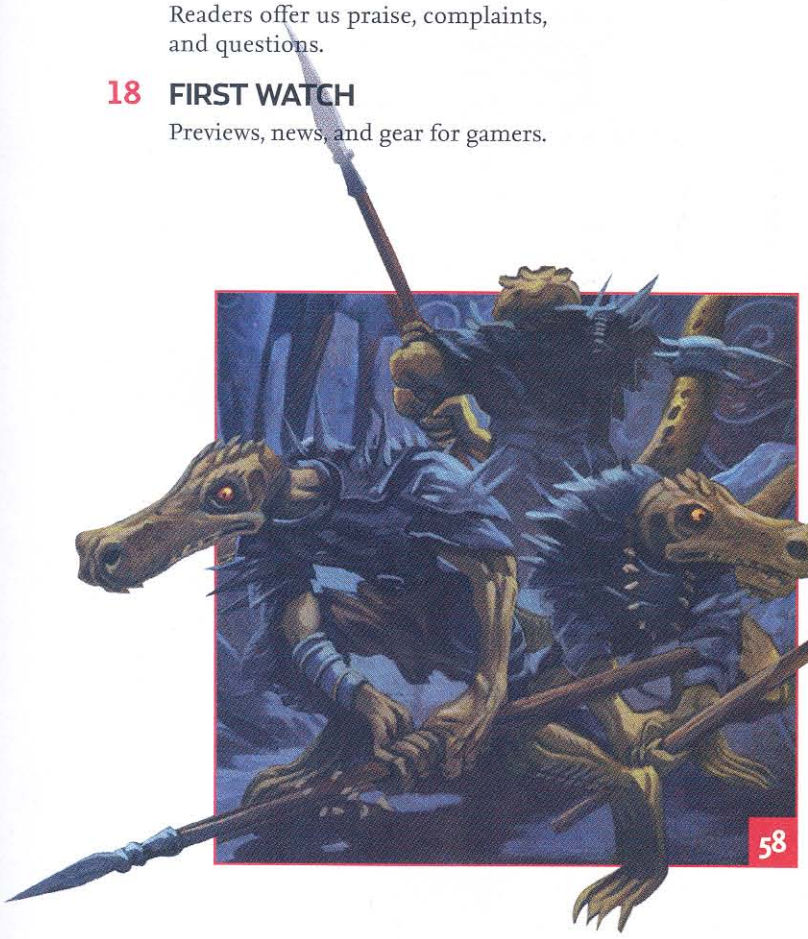

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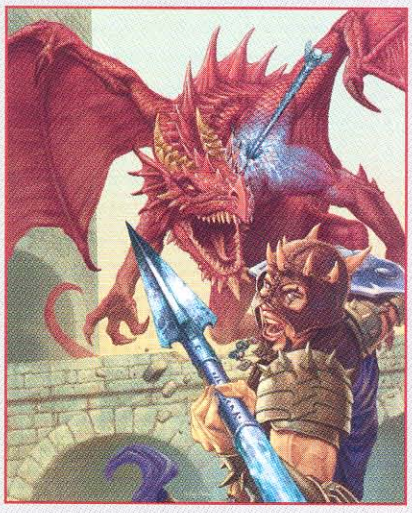
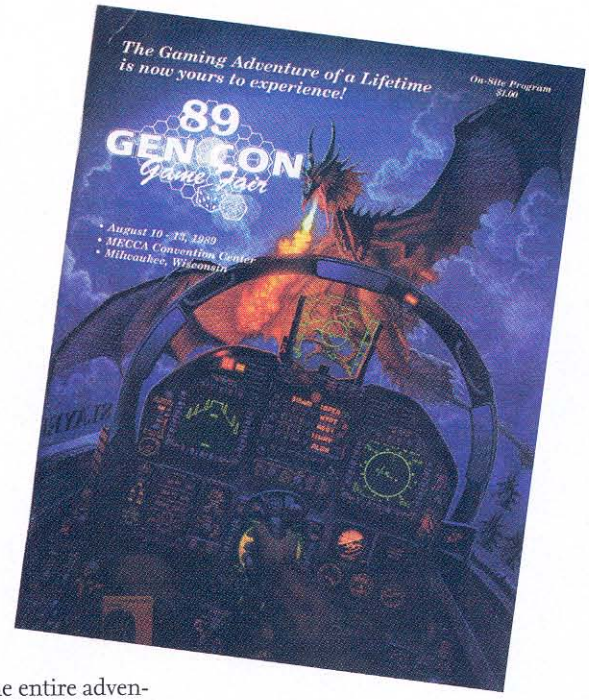
Marc Sasso's wyrm slayer cuts to the heart of the matter.



VISUAL AD&D



Under the strain of attempting to run both *Dungeon* and *Dragon* at the same time, Erik has finally cracked. So, with Gen Con rapidly approaching and Erik sent to Hawaii for psychiatric help, I thought I would take this time to share.

I started playing D&D at age 11. It took a great deal of convincing, but eventually I wore down my parents and they purchased the basic red-boxed set for me. After losing my first character to a yellow-mold-covered dinner plate, my friends and I began to play as often as possible, ravenously devouring adventure after adventure. We soon picked up the blue box, the green box, the black box, and finally the gold box. We fought goblins, dragons, demon lords, and mighty deities. There were no NPCs to talk to, only monsters to kill, traps to defeat, and treasure to amass. Those adventures were the best.

Growing up in Milwaukee, it did not take long to learn about Gen Con. The first year I went, my dad dropped off a friend and me outside the MECCA (Milwaukee Exposition Convention Center and Arena) Saturday morning. We got there early and there was little going on, or at least so I thought. Waving bye to dad, we started looking around for registration. Rounding the building, we found it—or rather we found the line that led to registration stretching all the way down the block. With a deep sense of wonder, we got in line. It was August 12th, 1989.

Badges and program in hand, we went inside, completely unprepared for the scale and majesty of the convention. It was simply amazing. Over the next four hours my friend and I wandered from hall to hall, admiring the expertly painted miniatures in glass cases, wishing we had more money as we wandered the dealer hall, and ogling the original art that graced many of the books we owned. We had the time of our lives, until we decided to find something to play.

Sitting behind the escalators, we pored through the convention program, looking for some game we could play—any game friendly to newbies. There were plenty of opportunities, but every time we went to buy a ticket the event had sold out or it was just too late to get one and still make it to the game on time. To top it off, we only knew how to play basic D&D and practically all the events used the AD&D rules. My friend and I had glanced through the big hardcover book, but neither of us owned it. As far as I knew, elf was still the best class to play because you could cast spells and wear armor. We felt horribly inexperienced.

Finally, one event rose above the rest: Visual AD&D. We had one hour to get a ticket for the event. It was only a four-hour slot and, more importantly, it had an "N" rating. N stood for novice players, which certainly described us. Grabbing our tickets, we rushed to the miniatures hall. The event was set up on a number of long tables in the very front of the room. Nervously, we walked up and handed over our tickets. Only then did we realize we'd hit the jackpot. Visual AD&D really was visual. The entire adventure took place in large dioramas with miniatures. The first was a forest setting leading up to a drawbringe and castle gate. It looked dangerous, foreboding, and absolutely fantastic. What was beyond the gate? We had no idea. The rest of the three-foot by three-foot wooden boxes were covered with white cloth, obscuring their contents.

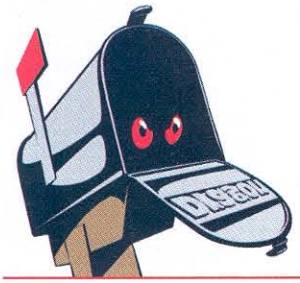
The next four hours went by in a blur. I played a dwarven fighter with a very big axe. Stomping through the woods, I remember running into an owlbear and fighting off the beast. The drawbridge led to a large cavernous space where we had to hop from pillar to pillar to avoid falling into the sandy depths below. Something moved down there, but fortunately it never got a taste of my sturdy dwarf. Leaving the sandy halls behind, we ventured into a great ice cave. Whoever crafted the diorama did a wonderful job here with a floor of solid ice and a wizened figure trapped in one of the walls. I am not sure if I chuckled with glee, but I should have. With time running out, we left the ice halls behind and ventured into a box dominated by a vast lava pit. A rickety wooden bridge crossed the pit. As time expired and the event came to a close, the bridge gave way (the diorama really broke in the middle) and we all tumbled toward our certain doom.

It was the best game I ever played.

I hope that every gamer who attends the big show has memories as fond as I do. If you happen to run into me this year at Gen Con, sitting eagerly near a diorama, I have only one request. Let me play the elf.

Jason Bulmahn
Associate Editor of *Dragon*

Thanks to Randall Porter, the Keeper of Gen Con Lore, for helping me dig up some old memories.



LETTERS

Tell us what you think of this issue. Send an email to **scalemail@paizo.com**. Please include your name, city, and state.

Craft (Aircraft)

Hey guys, just wanted to throw my two cents your way. My group and I are a bunch of geeks in the military, specifically the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps. We're stationed in the States with the air wing and work on classified aircraft. So what do we do on the weekends? We play D&D. It's a great morale boost for us and being able to get your magazines (*Dungeon* and *Dragon*) makes it even better. Now when we are broken-up and lacking a group we can still keep up to date till we find a new one wherever we are stationed. So from me and every other military geek out there, thanks, and keep up the great work!

Steven Shepherdson
U.S. Navy

On the Road Again

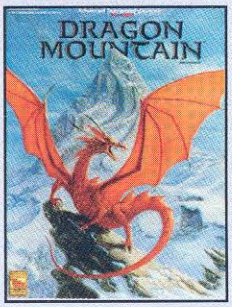
Kudos on Erik's editorial in issue #328. If this is the road ahead, I can only say: way to go!

Let me explain: I seem to fall into the third category of D&D enthusiasts identified by Erik, namely those who love the game but do not play as much as they would like to—even though I DM for my wonderfully open-minded girlfriend. This means that I watched the evolution of *Dragon* in a somewhat detached way. To be blunt, I never much cared for lots of new and often very strange feats, prestige classes, spells, or items. Conversely, and in a slightly schizophrenic way, I do fancy some well-dosed munchkinism, an aspect of the game epitomized by *The Knights of the Dinner Table*. The key to balance yin and yang, fluff and crunch, is that we want to create fascinating worlds, characters, and tales. And as catalysts these require inspiration, challenges, and rewards.

To me, the sometimes over-abundant wealth of crunchy content seemed to create a disjointed zoo of aberrations and gimmicks without rhyme or reason. I, for one, felt that the consistency and coherence of the game suffered to the point of bringing my suspension of disbelief crashing down. This is where fluff, particularly themes and clichés, comes in handy. The official worlds provide themes, such as the pulp noir of Eberron, which fuel my imagination. Clichés, in a positive sense, are archetypical motifs that each of us recognizes, wants to hear over and over again in new variations, and knows how to enact: like the eternal quest through devious dungeons and against icky dragons, you get the picture.

So, to get to the point: I like Class Acts because they apply to the clichéd archetypes that everybody likes to use, but keeps them fresh. I equally like the more recent Bazaar of the Bizarre items, because they are themed around fairly generic races and classes (elves, gnomes, or rogues come to mind), again offering variation around well-loved staples of D&D. But above all, I like features like the darkness issue (#322) because they read like good stories, make me itchy to start a campaign, and contain ready-to-use elements for DMs with a daytime job.

BLAST FROM THE PAST
DRAGON MOUNTAIN



In 1993, TSR gave D&D players a massive boxed-set adventure that integrated the two aspects most associated with the game: dungeons and dragons. As one might expect when dealing with a product based on dragons, *Dragon Mountain* was big. Really big.

The heavy box contained three books, six eight-panel poster maps, fifteen new monsters on eight new *Monstrous Compendium*-style pages, and a number of handouts and secondary maps that stacked up to an impressive half inch.

Each of the three 64-page books depicted a different red dragon on its cover. The first book presented a number of adventures the DM could use to bring the PCs to the infamous, plane-shifting Dragon Mountain. Book II covered the first two levels of the dungeon, as well as the various kobold tribes living there. The third book detailed the final level and the dragon at the heart of the adventure: Infyrana. In the climactic battle, Infyrana (polymorphed into kobold form) watched the PCs interact with Fragalax, a kobold changed into dragon form. Staying on the sidelines, with a number of her kobold minions, Infyrana prepared an ambush for the player characters. After this surprise twist played out and Infyrana is defeated, the massive dungeon ceased its plane-hopping existence.

Written by Colin McComb and Paul Lidberg, *Dragon Mountain* boasts interior art from fan-favorite Tony DiTerlizzi and cartography by Diesel.

All in all, Erik's words have indeed sparked my imagination and my hope for a continued development in this direction. I definitely like the road down which you are taking me. Ride on.

Ivo Mersiowsky
Hannover, Germany

You Were Right

First of all, I just want you to know that I hate to be wrong, but I am man enough to admit when I am. So here goes... you were right... I was wrong. There, I hope you are happy.

What am I talking about? Eberron, of course. I know that I swore I would never go anywhere near that campaign and that it would be a flop. It had to be a flop because I said so. I bitched and moaned, tired of seeing the endless Eberron hype in *Dragon* and its sister magazine, but it still kept coming. As they say, "resistance is futile." I was in the mall— which is our only means of acquiring D&D material—some 40 miles away, looking for the *Expanded Psionics Handbook, Book of Exalted Deeds*, or some new Forgotten Realms material. But, they didn't have them, or anything new that I was really interested in getting (I now believe this was all part of your insidious plan). While I stood there, money burning a hole in my pocket, pondering the merit of buying several items, I noticed a lone copy of the *Eberron Campaign Setting* sitting on the shelf. So I picked it up and began to thumb my way through it and thought, what the hey... it might not suck that bad. As luck would have it, some of my old gaming group popped in and wanted a Saturday night game. Well, time to find out if I threw my money away. As you probably guessed everyone loved Eberron, including me. So it looks like the new campaign home will be Eberron. They did a wonderful job creating a fantasy world with a very real feel to it. The history and tone of the world is interesting and because it's a new setting I don't feel overwhelmed by all that has come before like with Greyhawk. So long live Eberron!

I hope you enjoy this opportunity to gloat, because I am rarely wrong, so don't expect it to happen again.

As great as Eberron is I have an idea for the next expansion... *The Pirates of Eberron*. Complete rules for pirate characters and all manner of ships, weapons, and expanded rules for sea and air combat. That would be the best. Eberron is perfect for pirates. You guys have to put in a good word to Wizards or you could do it as special sections in both *Dungeon* and *Dragon* just like the Dark Sun issues. Make it so.

Thank you for your support.

Mike "Capt. D" Dockery
Via Email

While we don't currently have anything on the docket for a "Pirates of Eberron" issue, it's definitely something we'll keep in mind. Thanks for the suggestion.

13-Year-Old Fanatic

I was just writing to say that you're doing an excellent job on the magazine. I am currently 13 years old and got a subscription as a present a year or so ago and I was just wondering if you could maybe make some stats for just a couple weird *Call of Cthulhu* monsters every once in a while. I can't seem to find the book anywhere and I'm tired of trying to make 2–3 monsters per horror adventure. Oh, and I love the stuff you do in "Class Acts."

Harry Fieldman
Ottawa, ON

We're glad to have you as a reader, Harry! Check out Bruce Cordell's "Into the Far Realm," in issue #330 for some truly horrific creatures inspired by the weird fantasy of authors like H.P. Lovecraft. While we have no plans to run Call of Cthulhu *material per se (Wizards of the Coast no longer actively supports the d20 version of that game), I can assure you that we in the Paizo offices are big fans and will continue to push cosmic horror in the magazines. In the meantime, you might want to consider a trip to* **chaosium.com**, *where you'll find dozens of supplements for the classic* Basic Roleplaying *system. Whether you play this stuff straight out of the books or use it as inspiration for your D&D game, it's hard to go wrong with* Call of Cthulhu.

KNOWLEDGE CHECK

According to the movie *Dragonslayer*, how many baby dragons does it take to eat a princess?

More Settings, Please

Why doesn't Wizards of the Coast do more settings? In the first edition and second edition eras we got a fantastic run of new worlds and settings to explore: From the original Greyhawk to Dragonlance, then on into Forgotten Realms, Ravenloft, Mystara, the *Horde Boxed Set*, Al-Qadim, Dark Sun, Birthright, Hollow World, Spelljammer, Planescape, and others. Not only that, they had those fantastic little green historical fantasy books. In the last five years what have we got? A relaunch of Forgotten Realms, some more Greyhawk, and the Eberron setting. Meanwhile we get a new hardbound book each month with yet more feats, spells, and prestige classes in them. Why not explore some new worlds? I know Eberron has much more space in it, but what happened to all the quirky game settings? I loved those.

Jason F. Smith
Via Email

To make a very long story short, when the business folks at Wizards of the Coast analyzed sales information following the purchase of D&D's former publisher TSR in 1996, they discovered that the company's numerous campaign settings actually fractured the audience, weakening the D&D business as a whole. Greyhawk fans had little reason to buy Forgotten Realms products, and fans deeply enmeshed in the Birthright campaign setting had little reason to check out Al-Qadim. With the

birth of third edition, Wizards decided to slim down the official setting offerings. Folks who wanted to play D&D straight out of the book were given a slim framework of the GREYHAWK *campaign to serve as a common backdrop. The most popular setting, the* FORGOTTEN REALMS*, survived in the form of a series of high-quality, high-production value hardcovers. Last year, Wizards launched the new* EBERRON *campaign setting, the first official setting to be designed from the ground up with a third edition mentality. All other settings were retired.*

That said, since the launch of third edition, Wizards has licensed a few of the old campaign settings to third party publishers. DRAGONLANCE *game products now flow from the fine folks at Sovereign Press (**dragonlance.com**), and fans of* RAVENLOFT *can explore the Domains of Dread thanks to a new line of products from White Wolf's Arthaus imprint (**arthousegames.com**).*

*You might also want to check out last year's "Campaign Classics" issue (*DRAGON *#315), which included articles on* DARK SUN*,* AL-QADIM*,* PLANESCAPE*, and a dozen other settings. Look for another Campaign Classics issue next year.*

REPRINT GAMES

I have a suggestion for a product that I hope you will consider.

A brief background:

I was a gamer during the eighties, primary playing AD&D. I was also a DRAGON subscriber.

Gradually I drifted away and didn't play for years, but fairly recently I've taken an interest again. During my gaming years, DRAGON included a lot of great games in its pages (i.e. *King of the Tabletop, Elefant Hunt, File 13, The Baton Races of Yaz*, and so on).

My question to you: would it be possible to publish a collection of these games?

I realize that printing such a thing may be expensive, but it would be worth it. There is an entire generation of younger players who have never seen them, and they are missing out on some really good games.

There is another consideration: it's something that may appeal to non-gamers. Bringing new people into roleplaying games may not be easy—the learning curve is lengthy—but these games are self-contained and relatively easy to learn. And if this collection had, say, ten games, then nearly everyone would like at least one or two of them. I have some younger relatives; this would make a great gift for them.

Thanks for your time.

RKS
Brookline, MA

Some of the delightful games published in DRAGON *in the 1980s have recently been re-released by Steve Jackson Games.* Awful Green Things from Outer Space *(from* DRAGON *#28) and* Snits! *(an update of issue #20's* Snit Smashing*) are currently available from the **paizo.com** online store. The creative genius behind most of* DRAGON*'s early-era board games was Tom Wham, who runs an amusing site at **tomwham.com** that includes a retrospective of all the games he published in this magazine.*

PRAISE FOR 330

I'm writing to thank Richard Pett for what I think is one of the most interesting prestige classes that I've seen. The jester from issue #330 looks to have many exciting possibilities that I can't wait to add to my campaign.

Ted Ragonstaff's "Flaws for Commoners" had me laughing out loud and I have a new all-time favorite *Zogonia* comic strip!

Thanks to the entire DRAGON staff for an excellent issue.

Scott Sherrell
Via Email

Ted Ragonstaff's "Flaws for Commoners" was our favorite article in the issue, too. We just can't get enough of Ted Ragonstaff, and hope that you like his sterling work.

SMALL BOO BOO

First, let me say that I appreciate the hard work that the folks at Paizo are doing on keeping my two favorite magazines, DRAGON and DUNGEON, fresh and exciting. I wish Erik the best of luck as skipper of the titans. I have been a reader for well over a decade, and from a reader's perspective, I can see the very large shoes he has to fill. Good job so far, man.

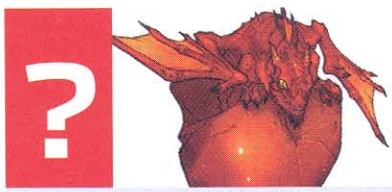
Second, and this is minor, I noticed a mistake in issue #330. While reading the Class Act on sorcerers I saw that Mr. Ling says that any sorcerer casting a spell from his opposing sphere casts as if she were two-levels lower. His example states that a caster who has fire as an opposing sphere cannot cast *fireball* until reaching 7th level. However, according to the *Player's Handbook*, such a mage would not be able to cast the 3rd-level evocation until reaching 8th-level.

Other than that, I found the entire issue made up for some lackluster issues that came out, notably the two previous issues. I can't speak for all, nor would I want to, but not much of these issues found its way into my game. But, hey, at least I get *Zogonia* and *Nodwick*.

In closing, thanks for the laughs, the fluff, and the crunch, and keep up the good work.

Sean P. Alexander
Via Email

Thanks for setting us straight on sorcery, and please keep reading. Exciting things are in store for your favorite magazines.
—Erik Mona



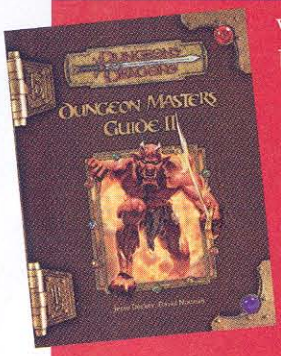
KNOWLEDGE CHECK ANSWER

Answer: To quote the script, "Two disgusting little reptiles—like scaly raccoons—are perched on the corpse of Princess Elspeth Ulfilas, feeding contentiously on choice bits of the royal flesh." Guess that's what happens when Peter MacNicol is the hero of your movie.

reported by Shelly Baur, Mike Fehlauer, Mike L. Fiegel, Erik Mona, and James Sutter

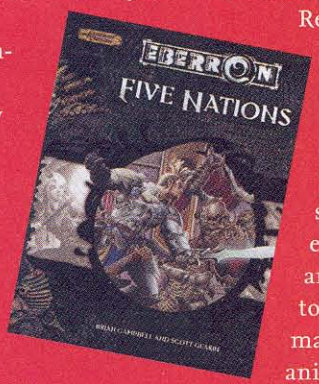
PREVIEWS, NOTES, AND NEWS FOR GAMERS

NEW RELEASES

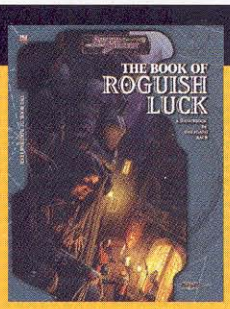


Want to run a better game? The new *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide II* provides DMs of all skill levels with numerous practical approaches for customized adventures while expanding some of the most valuable tools from the original. Designed by Jesse Decker, James Jacobs, Robin D. Laws, David Noonan, and Chris Thomasson, the book includes many time saving elements, from new encounter tables to the entire town of Saltmarsh (of *The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh* fame), expertly detailed and ready to use. Co-author and *DUNGEON* managing editor James Jacobs hints that the book includes "unique NPC abilities, rules for building cities, more specific random encounter tables, more unique traps, and lots of adventure and campaign building advice," making the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide II* an invaluable tool in any campaign. *–S.B.*

Explore EBERRON in a whole new way with *Five Nations*. Designed by Bill Slavicsek, David Noonan, and Christopher Perkins, the histories, people, and customs of Khorvaire differentiate themselves as never before. Descriptions of each nation present specific new monsters, adventure hooks, and NPCs. For instance, only Thranes possess the silvereye marauder, a construct infused with the Silver Flame, while Karrns might join the exclusive Order of Rekkenmark, fully fleshed out with honorary ranks, specialized equipment, and access to unique magebred animals. You will also gain character insights and ideas from the various "Day in the Life of..." stories, plus the many flavorful sidebars detailing common expressions, regional names, and even national anthems. *–S.B.*



FEELING LUCKY



This month sees the release of Malhavoc Press' *The Book of Roguish Luck!* Designed by Wolfgang Baur, inside you'll find an all-new bag of tricks including a luck system for all classes; roguish spells for bards, clerics, and other tricksters; and expanded guild rules. Rogues can try on three new core classes: the shadowsworn, the gutter mage, or the bandit, or check out new rules for bribery, cheating, and gambling that work for every character class. Completely compatible with Monte Cook's *Arcana Evolved*, *The Book of Roguish Luck* offers details on all facets of the underworld, its trappings, and its denizens, regardless of what campaign setting you use. *–S.B.*

NEXT MONTH IN DRAGON

DRAGON July #333

Demonimicon of Iggwilv: Fraz-Urb'luu

by James Jacobs

This installment of the demonomicon reveals the demon prince of deception, Fraz-Urb'luu. Freed at last from his imprisonment beneath Castle Greyhawk, this demon lord hungers for revenge against the mortal realm that held him captive. Learn about his malleable layer of the Abyss, the dark powers of his signature staff, and the cruel demons and cultists who serve him through their subtle lies.

Noble Born

by Keith Baker

EBERRON's creator leaves Khorvaire for a look at what it takes to play a character of noble birth. Explore a host of options from the exiled king to the cursed prince, all here to add that touch of nobility to your game.

Relics of the Realms

by George Swan

A host of new magic items for the faithful of the FORGOTTEN REALMS. Let your players feel the wrath of Bane's *rod of clenched fists*, find solace in wearing Ilmater's *ribbons of the twice-martyred*, or learn the meaning of truth with Torm's *true-word buckler.*

Plus!

The Ecology of the Behir, Spellcraft: Visions of Fear, and of course, Class Acts, Bazaar of the Bizarre, First Watch, Scale Mail, Sage Advice, and comics.

SOME KIND OF MONSTER

The award-winning *Monsternomicon* from Privateer Press receives a makeover for D&D 3.5 this month. Everything that made the original bestiary of the Iron Kingdoms great reappears in this 240-page revised edition: artwork by industry favorites like Brian Snoddy, scale comparison, ecology notes, knowledge check results, and adventure hooks for each monster. Other features like prestige classes for monster hunters, environment tables, "quickplate" templates to apply to monsters on-the-fly, cosmology notes for the Iron Kingdoms campaign setting, and much more all make the *Monsternomicon 3.5* far more than a mere rules and numbers monster book. Pick up the *Monsternomicon 3.5* and all of Privateer Press' other products at **paizo.com**. *–M.F.*

SOMETHING WEIRD THIS WAY COMES

With *War of the Worlds* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* on their way, here are a few of the quirkier films delights heading to a flickering screen near you.

Mirror Mask, from Neil Gaiman (*Sandman, Neverwhere*) and Jim Henson studios, is the story of a circus girl who wants to run away and join mundane life, but winds up caught in a war between two fantastical kingdoms. Part *Wizard of Oz*, part *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, this movie explores realms of weird imagination as created by the masters of unreality. Check it out at **mirrormask.com**.

Animated with the most state-of-the-art computer graphics, *Final Fantasy VII: Advent Children* (the movie) is the sequel to *Final Fantasy VII* (the game). Featuring several characters from the game, Cloud and his companions must reunite to cure a bizarre plague, as well as the plot of a triune of villains tied to the vanquished would-be god Sephiroth. Learn more at **adventchildren.net**.

Also from Japan comes *Howl's Moving Castle*, created by anime legend Hayao Miyazaki (*My Neighbor Totoro, Princess Mononoke*). Miyazaki's vibrant film follows a girl—transformed by a witch into the form of an old woman—who seeks the infamous moving black castle of the wizard Howl. Like all Miyazaki films (detailed at **nausicaa.net**) the simple plot and charming characters are merely the glossy surface reflection of an astonishingly deep pool. *–M.F.*

MINI OF THE MONTH

Reaper Miniatures brings us our mini of the month this time around. In just thirteen short years, they've gone from humble beginnings in a Ft. Worth garage to achieve global impact with their various fantasy lines, Scrye Counter series of CCG accessories, and Reaper Pro Paints. Can world domination be far behind? Not if they continue to produce excellent work like this.

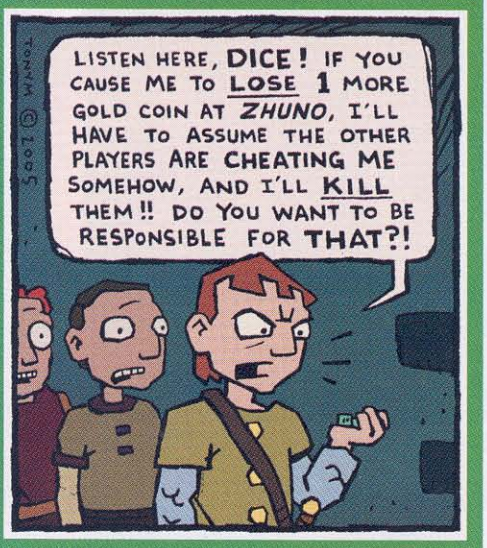
Sculpted by Bobby Jackson, the Crimson Knight Sergeant features a bat-winged helm, flowing robes over plate armor, a massive morningstar in one hand and a screaming shield in the other. Anti-paladin? Evil cult leader? Undead general? Demonic lord from beyond? In any case, he's the perfect foil for any party of adventurers, standing roughly as tall as your pre-painted D&D minis. Also, that shield just begs to be a powerful magic item, like a variant *lion's shield*, taking bites out of PCs while its owner bashes away with his massive (unholy?) morningstar.

Browse the Reaper Mini collection for a whole host of villains and heroes, see what's on the horizon, and try out their Fantasy Fig Finder at **reapermini.com**. *–M.L.F.*

www.nqxstore.com

MUSHROOMS AND MAYHEM

For fans of the *Zogonia* and *Mt. Zogon* strips in DRAGON and DUNGEON, there's now an easy alternative to digging out all your back issues every time you need a fix—**zogonia.com**! Designed and maintained by creator Tony Moseley, **zogonia.com** offers free access to every *Mt. Zogon* strip ever drawn—including a risqué episode that never saw print—as well as an archive of older *Zogonia* strips and commentary updated every Monday. When you're done browsing, scope out the online store with *Zogonia* shirts, buttons, and sculptures bearing the likeness of *Mt. Zogon's* lovable mushroom, as well as original character sketches of Kev and Galeena the sociopathic druid—buy both and receive an exclusive free mystery sketch! Also, new this month are official rules for Zhuno, a gambling dice game popular among Zogonia's rogues and underclass (and the reason Kev's always poor). *–J.S.*


LISTEN HERE, DICE! IF YOU CAUSE ME TO LOSE 1 MORE GOLD COIN AT ZHUNO, I'LL HAVE TO ASSUME THE OTHER PLAYERS ARE CHEATING ME SOMEHOW, AND I'LL KILL THEM!! DO YOU WANT TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THAT?!
TONY © 2005

BRING THE PAIN

Not quite board game, not quite wargame, Adiken and Fantastic Forges, Inc.'s *Nin-Gonost* takes the standard ideas of fantasy wargaming and simplifies them for any layman. The game's modular—although unpainted—terrain system incorporates thin magnets to ensure that the plastic walls won't be knocked down by an over-exuberant dice throw. *Nin-Gonost* comes with rules, 14 unpainted pewter miniatures, painting supplies, dice, enough terrain for the given scenarios, and a $150 price tag—all in a light wooden carrying case displaying brand-new art by Jeff Easley. *–J.S.*

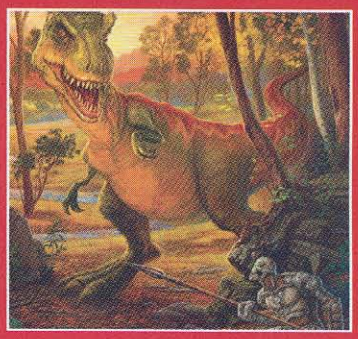
ORIGINS 2005

With some 300 exhibitors and more than 3,000 game-related events, the Origins International Game Expo returns to Columbus, Ohio this month. For the first time, Origins plays host to CthulhuThon (run by **shoggoth.net**) a *Call of Cthulhu* extravaganza featuring a multi-round game tournament, prizes, and more Cthonic goodness. White Wolf fans will also get sneak peeks at plans for *Mage: The Awakening* and the *Second Age of Exalted.*

Origins 2005 runs from Thursday, June 30 to Sunday, July 3. Pre-register and save $10 online at **originsgames.com**. *–M.L.F.*

DUNGEON THIS MONTH

DUNGEON #123



Quicksilver Hourglass

by Anson Caralya

Hidden between the planes of existance, the Quicksilver Hourglass has kept its terrible prisoner obscured from reality. Yet now, a transplanar conspiracy of vampiric masterminds has invaded this ancient prison intent on unleashing a wretched doom upon all that live and breathe. An epic D&D adventure for 30th-level characters.

Salvage Operation

by Mike Mearls

Months ago, a powerful merchant's ship vanished. Four days ago, it reappeared, adrift at sea. Are your players prepared for what lurks inside its slowly sinking ruin? A D&D adventure for 2nd-level characters.

Crypt of Crimson Stars, Part 1

by Andy Collins and James Wyatt

Face cruel halflings, deadly dinosaurs, and a trap-laden temple-tomb to retrieve a dragonshard of enormous size and power. Part one of the three-part "Shards of EBERRON" Campaign Arc, which debuted at Gen Con Indy 2004 as the official D&D Open tournament, sponsered by the RPGA. An EBERRON adventure for 6th-level characters.

The Amarantha Agenda

by Phillip Larwood

Can your PCs reclaim a sacred elven site from its corrupted dryad mistress before she extends her foul influence further? A D&D adventure for 13th-level characters.

ANDRE NORTON (1912–2005)

Andre Norton, 93, the esteemed author of more than 100 science fiction and fantasy books, died of congestive heart failure in her Murfreesboro, Tennessee home on March 17. An Andre Norton story, says John Clute in the *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, "will show the virtues of clear construction, a high degree of narrative control, protagonists whose qualities allow easy reader-identification, and a universe fundamentally responsive to virtue, good will, and spunk."

Although she is best known for the Witch World science-fantasy series that began in 1963 and comprised more than thirty titles, Norton holds an honor of particular interest to DRAGON readers as the author of the very first DUNGEONS & DRAGONS novel, *Quag Keep*, published by Daw in 1978.

Early that year, Norton approached Gary Gygax and asked if he would allow her to write a book based on the still-new game. Gygax and two of his children visited Norton's home on a

detour from Gen Con South, where he ran a game of D&D to show her what it was all about. The lesson took. *Quag Keep* skillfully captures the spirit of early D&D and is even set in a pre-publication version of Gygax's WORLD OF GREYHAWK.

"I was pleased, certainly, with the novel," remembers Gygax. "It was a fun read. It wasn't heavily D&D, but I thought it was an excellent adventure.... Books and gaming are a good mix. Books require imagination, and that's what D&D is all about."

Author and game designer Jean Rabe struck up a friendship with Norton while editing an anthology containing a new Andre Norton tale, and eventually collaborated with her on *Return to Quag Keep*, a sequel set for release in January, 2006. "Andre did a line-edit on my first draft, which I have tucked away in a treasure box. Quite a bit of work she put into it, and quite a lot that she taught me. To get a lesson by the "Grande Dame of Science Fiction and Fantasy" was priceless. I fully believe she has made me a better writer, and made me see things through different eyes."

At Norton's direction, there will be no service. She requested memorials to be made in her honor to St. Jude's Children's Hospital and Veterinary Services (c/o the Noah Fund) P.O. Box 10128, Murfreesboro, TN 37129. *–Erik Mona*

RPGA UPDATE

by Ian Richards
RPGA Program Manager

For more years than I can remember, RPGA members have asked us if they could include their home characters and adventures in our events. Great questions, but in the organization's various evolutions this wasn't something we could monitor and check. Until now, that is.

The new EBERRON *Mark of Heroes* campaign allows exactly what GMs and players the world over keep asking for: The inclusion of their adventures in the official RPGA campaign. In addition, members can now report their home games and count them for rewards points! Herald member and higher-ranked GMs can report their games via our online reporting mechanisms (**rpga.com**) choosing EBERRON, GREYHAWK, FORGOTTEN REALMS or "other" to report their play under the Home Campaign Play section. This allows all those who sign up for the D&D Rewards Program to gain credit for their games. So now you can play your own home characters in your own home adventures and still get D&D Rewards credit!

In other news, players and GMs all over the world report being swamped with goodies as the latest D&D Rewards mailing arrives. Since we recently increased the benefits of participating in the D&D Rewards Program, players received three D&D Campaign Cards per 20 points, while DMs got a complete set at 60 points. Well, we're mixing it up again this month. Instead of a full set of D&D Campaign Cards for GMs at 60 points we're duplicating the rewards for players and sending GMs three cards for every 20 points too! This move should set up GMs with more D&D Campaign Cards faster than ever before.

That's it for this month. Here's wishing our best to all our members and future members. Enjoy all your new D&D Rewards ,and good gaming!

www.hpdxplorer.com

by Mike McArtor
illustrated by Andrew Hou

Chromatic Dragons

Rage on Wings

From fetid swamps and darkened forests to blasted deserts and barren mountain peaks, chromatic dragons command respect—and fear—from all those who dare live near them. These awesome beasts live for millennia feasting upon both the flesh and fears of the puny, lesser races.

Yet, not all chromatic dragons hate. A few, either as abominations of their kind or as those raised by supposedly weak but eternally compassionate mortals, master their cruel instincts and live for the cause of good—or at least neutrality.

Last year, DRAGON #320 presented the advancement rules for metallic dragons as monster classes. By popular demand, this article presents the advancements for chromatic dragons.

Dragon Monster Class Advancement

First introduced in *Savage Species*, monster classes allow characters to start out at 1st level as their players' favorite monsters. Because most monsters are inherently more powerful than a human or elf, the only way for them to fairly start the game at 1st level is to treat monsters as character classes. The rules presented here allow you to play a chromatic dragon as a 1st-level character and advance that character up to 20th level, just as any other character class.

Note that, as in *Savage Species*, the ability score adjustments listed in the level advancement tables stack, but the natural armor bonuses do not. The natural armor bonus listed for a particular level is the dragon's new natural armor bonus.

Common Dragon Racial Traits

All dragons have the following in common.

- **Dragon Type:** Dragons are immune to effects that only affect humanoids, such as *charm person*. This is a boon to any dragon who travels with humanoids.
- **Keen Senses (Ex):** A dragon can see four times as well as a human in shadowy illumination and twice as well in normal light. It also has darkvision and can see in the dark up to 120 feet.
- **Immunities (Ex):** All dragons have immunity to sleep and paralysis effects. Each kind of dragon has one or two additional immunities as given in its description.
- **Dragon Overland Movement (Ex):** Once a dragon attains a fly speed of at least 100 feet, it gains the ability to fly over vast distances in a single day. See the *Monster Manual*, page 70, for how far a dragon can fly in an hour or a day, based on its fly speed.
- **Automatic Languages:** Draconic. Bonus Languages: Any (other than secret languages, such as Druidic).
- **Favored Class:** Dragon. A dragon cannot multiclass into another dragon class. The best multiclassing choice for a dragon is fighter or barbarian, although taking levels as a sorcerer advances the dragon's spellcasting ability. Players of dragon characters should also consider the dragon prestige classes in the *Draconomicon*.

Common Dragon Class Skills

A dragon's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Diplomacy (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Listen (Wis), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), and Use Magic Device (Cha). Each dragon kind has additional class skills as listed in its description.

Common Dragon Class Features

All of the following are class features of dragon classes.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Dragons have no proficiency with weapons, armor, or shields in dragon form.

Age Category: For reference, the dragon's age category is listed at the level it attains all the traits and features a dragon of that age normally has. At levels before wyrmling status is attained, dragons are hatchlings (age category 0).

Blindsense (Ex): Dragons can pinpoint creatures within 60 feet, but opponents they can't see have total concealment.

Bite: Every dragon has a bite attack that is a natural weapon dealing the indicated damage plus the dragon's Strength modifier. Note that dragons do not gain multiple natural attacks for having a high base attack bonus.

Claws: A dragon has up to two claws attacks that are natural weapons dealing the indicated damage plus 1/2 the dragon's Strength bonus.

Wings: Medium and larger dragons can slap opponents with their wings, even while flying. Wing attacks deal the indicated damage plus 1/2 the dragon's Strength bonus and are treated as secondary natural attacks.

Tail Slap: A Large dragon has a tail slap attack that is a natural weapon dealing the indicated damage plus 1-1/2 times the dragon's Strength bonus.

Breath Weapon (Su): A dragon may use its breath weapon as a standard action, but it must wait 1d4 rounds between uses. The save DC against a dragon's breath weapon is 10 + 1/2 the dragon's Hit Dice + the dragon's Constitution modifier. See the *Monster Manual*, page 69, for the length of a dragon's breath weapons.

Size Category: As a dragon advances, its size increases. The dragon gains all the characteristics of the new size except that it does not gain the typical ability score changes due to a size change. The dragon's changes to ability scores are accounted for in the advancement charts.

Spells: Higher-level dragon PCs know and cast arcane spells as a sorcerer of the level indicated in parentheses in their advancement charts, gaining bonus spells for a high Charisma. Some dragon kinds may also cast spells from the cleric spell list and from the spell lists of two or more domains.

ECL and LA

A creature's effective character level (ECL) is the sum of its Hit Dice, level adjustment, and class levels. Use character level for most game functions except awarding experience, determining starting equipment, and determining how much experience the character needs to gain a new level. For all three of those functions, use effective character level instead.

Level adjustment (LA) is a measure of how much more powerful a creature is than other creatures of its Hit Dice. A level adjustment provides a numeric comparison with the seven standard races from the *Player's Handbook*, showing how much more powerful that creature is than one of the standard races, in terms of levels.

For more information on ECL and LA, see the *Monster Manual* glossary and Monsters as Races on page 172 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Levels above ECL

The ECLs for each dragon kind's age categories use the level adjustments established in *Savage Species*. As such, only the green dragon has an age category ECL that coincidentally ends at 20th level. All the other dragon kinds end between 16th and 19th level. In order to provide a 20-level monster class progression for every chromatic dragon, all the dragons except green dragons have their next highest age category ECL estimated and then made into the appropriate class levels, ending at 20th level.

Dragon PCs and age categories

Like all other characters, dragon player characters are exceptional members of their race. For dragons this means that they advance to higher age categories based not on the passage of years, but on the gaining of experience. Although a dragon PC starts out as less powerful than a typical dragon wyrmling, that same character can attain the physical and mental abilities of a juvenile dragon while most of his clutch-mates remain wyrmlings.

The rules presented here originally appeared in *Dragon* #320 and are an alternative both to the Dragon Age Categories chart given on page 68 of the *Monster Manual* and the Dragons as Player Characters section of the *Draconomicon*. Many campaigns don't last long enough (in terms of game time) for a dragon PC to grow past the wyrmling age category, thereby making advancement as a dragon in either of those two rule options difficult.

Instead, adapting the rules presented in *Savage Species*, a dragon PC using the dragon monster classes presented here advances to the next age category when it attains a certain class level. Each dragon monster class presents the dragon from 1st to 20th level. A dragon character may not multiclass into a standard character class until it completes the progression of its current age category; it then may return to the dragon class later to gain the next age category.

If your DM wishes to maintain the age categories and the time a dragon needs to attain them, you can still play a dragon from the campaign's starting PC level up to the level before your dragon PC changes age categories.

Red Dragon

Dragon (Fire)

Proud and remarkably covetous (even by draconic standards), red dragons imagine themselves as the epitome of the draconic form. As such, their vanity makes them susceptible to flattery. Red dragons look down upon those they consider their inferiors, which generally is every other creature. For more information about red dragons, consult the *Monster Manual* and the *Draconomicon*.

Racial Traits

- Fire Subtype: Red dragons have immunity to fire. They take half again as much damage (+50%) as normal from cold damage, regardless of whether a saving throw is allowed, or if the save is a success or failure.
- Medium: As Medium creatures, wyrmling red dragons have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- Red dragon starting base land speed is 30 feet.

Additional Class Skills

In addition to the class skills all dragons have, a red dragon's class skills (and the key ability for each) are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), and Jump (Str).

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the red dragon monster class.

Feats: A red dragon receives one feat at 1st level and additional feats at 3rd, 8th, 14th, and 18th level.

Breath Weapon (Su): A red dragon has one type of breath weapon, a cone of fire.

Spells: A red dragon may cast spells from the Chaos, Evil, and Fire domains as arcane spells. See Common Dragon Class Features for more details.

RED DRAGON

Level	Hit Dice	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Skill Points	Special
1	1d12	+1	+2	+2	+2	(6 + Int mod) x 4	Feat, bite 1d8, claws 1d6, 2 wings 1d4
2	2d12	+2	+3	+3	+3	6 + Int mod	+1 natural armor
3	3d12	+3	+3	+3	+3	6 + Int mod	Feat, fly 50 ft. (poor)
4	3d12	+3	+3	+3	+3	—	+2 Con, +2 natural armor
5	4d12	+4	+4	+4	+4	6 + Int mod	Speed 40 ft., fire breath 1d10
6	4d12	+4	+4	+4	+4	—	+2 Str, +3 natural armor
7	5d12	+5	+4	+4	+4	6 + Int mod	+2 Str, blindsense
8	6d12	+6	+5	+5	+5	6 + Int mod	Feat, fly 100 ft. (poor), +4 natural armor
9	6d12	+6	+5	+5	+5	—	+2 Str, +2 Con
10	7d12	+7	+5	+5	+5	6 + Int mod	Fire breath 2d10, +5 natural armor
11	7d12	+7	+5	+5	+5	—	**Wyrmling**, fly 150 ft. (poor), +6 natural armor
12	8d12	+8	+6	+6	+6	6 + Int mod	+2 Wis, fire breath 3d10, +7 natural armor
13	8d12	+8	+6	+6	+6	—	+2 Con, +2 Int, +2 Cha, +8 natural armor
14	9d12	+9	+6	+6	+6	6 + Int mod	Feat, +2 Str, fire breath 4d10, +9 natural armor
15	10d12	+10	+7	+7	+7	6 + Int mod	**Very Young**, Large size, +2 Str, bite 2d6, claws 1d8, wings 1d6, tail slap 1d8
16	11d12	+11	+7	+7	+7	6 + Int mod	Fire breath 5d10, +10 natural armor
17	11d12	+11	+7	+7	+7	—	+2 Str, +11 natural armor
18	12d12	+12	+8	+8	+8	6 + Int mod	Feat, fire breath 6d10, +12 natural armor
19	13d12	+13	+8	+8	+8	6 + Int mod	**Young**, +2 Str, spells (1st)
20	14d12	+14	+9	+9	+9	6 + Int mod	+2 Int, +2 Cha, +13 natural armor

Blue Dragon

Dragon (Earth)

Blue dragons are vain and territorial. They lead highly organized and regimented lives. In whatever territories they inhabit blue dragons strive to subjugate all creatures weaker than themselves, establishing their rule as cruel tyrants over entire regions. For more information about blue dragons, consult the *Monster Manual* and the *Draconomicon*.

Racial Traits

- Earth Subtype: Blue dragons are comfortable within the confines of stone.
- Small: As Small creatures, wyrmling blue dragons gain a +1 size bonus to Armor Class, a +1 size bonus on attack rolls, and a +4 size bonus on Hide checks, but they must use smaller weapons than Medium creatures do, and their lifting and carrying limits are three-quarters of those of Medium characters.
- Blue dragon starting base land speed is 20 feet.
- Immunity to Electricity: A blue dragon takes no damage from electricity.

Additional Class Skills

In addition to the class skills all dragons have, a blue dragon's class skills (and the key ability for each) are Bluff (Cha), Hide (Dex), and Spellcraft (Int).

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the blue dragon monster class.

Feats: A blue dragon receives one feat at 1st level and additional feats at 3rd, 9th, 13th, and 17th level.

Spell-Like Ability: Beginning at 3rd level, the blue dragon can cast *create water* three times per day. The blue dragon can use this spell-like ability to destroy water as well (see page 72 of the *Monster Manual*). Caster level equals the dragon's age category (dragons below wyrmling level and at wyrmling are 1st-level casters, very young dragons are 2nd-level casters, young dragons are 3rd-level casters, and so on). The save is Charisma-based.

Breath Weapon (Su): A blue dragon has one type of breath weapon, a line of lightning.

Spells: A blue dragon may cast spells from the Air, Evil, and Law domains as arcane spells. See Common Dragon Class Features for more details.

BLUE DRAGON

Level	Hit Dice	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Skill Points	Special
1	1d12	+1	+2	+2	+2	(6 + Int mod) x 4	Feat, bite 1d6, 2 claws 1d4
2	2d12	+2	+3	+3	+3	6 + Int mod	Burrow 20 ft., +1 natural armor
3	3d12	+3	+3	+3	+3	6 + Int mod	Feat, *create/destroy water*
4	3d12	+3	+3	+3	+3	—	+2 Con, +2 natural armor
5	4d12	+4	+4	+4	+4	6 + Int mod	Fly 50 ft. (average), lightning breath 1d8
6	4d12	+4	+4	+4	+4	—	Blindsense, +3 natural armor
7	5d12	+5	+4	+4	+4	6 + Int mod	+4 natural armor
8	5d12	+5	+4	+4	+4	—	+2 Str, +5 natural armor
9	6d12	+6	+5	+5	+5	6 + Int mod	Feat, lightning breath 2d8
10	6d12	+6	+5	+5	+5	—	**Wyrmling**, speed 40 ft., fly 100 ft. (average), +5 natural armor
11	7d12	+7	+5	+5	+5	6 + Int mod	+2 Con, lightning breath 3d8, +6 natural armor
12	8d12	+8	+6	+6	+6	6 + Int mod	+2 Str, lightning breath 4d8, +7 natural armor
13	9d12	+9	+6	+6	+6	6 + Int mod	**Very Young**, feat, Medium size, fly 150 ft. (poor), bite 1d8, claws 1d6, 2 wings 1d4, +8 natural armor
14	10d12	+10	+7	+7	+7	6 + Int mod	+2 Wis, lightning breath 5d8
15	11d12	+11	+7	+7	+7	6 + Int mod	+2 Int, +2 Cha, +9 natural armor
16	11d12	+11	+7	+7	+7	—	+2 Str, +2 Con, +10 natural armor
17	12d12	+12	+8	+8	+8	6 + Int mod	**Young**, feat, lightning breath 6d8, +11 natural armor
18	13d12	+13	+8	+8	+8	6 + Int mod	+2 Wis, lightning breath 7d8, +12 natural armor
19	14d12	+14	+9	+9	+9	6 + Int mod	+2 Int, +2 Cha, +13 natural armor
20	14d12	+14	+9	+9	+9	—	+2 Con, spells (1st), lightning breath 8d8

Green Dragon

Dragon (Air)

Shrewd and manipulative as well as aggressive and belligerent, green dragons clash with every creature they meet, whether with open violence or through elaborate and cruel schemes. For more information about green dragons, consult the *Monster Manual* and the *Draconomicon.*

Racial Traits

- Air Subtype: Green dragons feel comfortable while in flight.
- Small: As Small creatures, wyrmling green dragons gain a +1 size bonus to Armor Class, a +1 size bonus on attack rolls, and a +4 size bonus on Hide checks, but they must use smaller weapons than Medium creatures do, and their lifting and carrying limits are three-quarters of those of Medium characters.
- Green dragon starting base land speed is 20 feet. They also have a swim speed of 20 feet. Note that having a swim speed gives green dragons a +8 racial bonus on Swim checks to perform a special action or avoid a hazard in the water.
- Immunity to Acid: A green dragon takes no damage from acid.

Additional Class Skills

In addition to the class skills all dragons have, a green dragon's class skills (and the key ability for each) are Bluff (Cha), Hide (Dex), and Move Silently (Dex).

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the green dragon monster class.

Feats: A green dragon receives one feat at 1st level and additional feats at 5th, 11th, 14th, and 17th level.

Breath Weapon (Su): A green dragon has one type of breath weapon, a cone of corrosive (acid) gas.

Water Breathing (Ex): A green dragon can breathe underwater indefinitely and can freely use its breath weapons, spells, and other abilities while submerged.

GREEN DRAGON

Level	Hit Dice	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Skill Points	Special
1	1d12	+1	+2	+2	+2	(6 + Int mod) x 4	Feat, bite 1d6, 2 claws 1d4, water breathing
2	1d12	+1	+2	+2	+2	—	+1 natural armor
3	2d12	+2	+3	+3	+3	6 + Int mod	Fly 50 ft. (average), swim 40 ft.
4	2d12	+2	+3	+3	+3	—	+2 Con, +2 natural armor
5	3d12	+3	+3	+3	+3	6 + Int mod	Feat, acid breath 1d6
6	3d12	+3	+3	+3	+3	—	+2 Str, fly 70 ft. (average)
7	4d12	+4	+4	+4	+4	6 + Int mod	+3 natural armor
8	4d12	+4	+4	+4	+4	—	Speed 40 ft., blindsense
9	5d12	+5	+4	+4	+4	6 + Int mod	Acid breath 2d6
10	5d12	+5	+4	+4	+4	—	**Wyrmling**, fly 100 ft. (average), +4 natural armor
11	6d12	+6	+5	+5	+5	6 + Int mod	Feat, +2 Con, acid breath 3d6, +5 natural armor
12	7d12	+7	+5	+5	+5	6 + Int mod	+2 Str, fly 150 ft. (poor), +6 natural armor
13	8d12	+8	+6	+6	+6	6 + Int mod	**Very Young**, Medium size, bite 1d8, claws 1d6, 2 wings 1d4, acid breath 4d6, +7 natural armor
14	9d12	+9	+6	+6	+6	6 + Int mod	Feat, +2 Con, +2 Wis, +8 natural armor
15	10d12	+10	+7	+7	+7	6 + Int mod	+2 Int, +2 Cha, acid breath 5d6, +9 natural armor
16	11d12	+11	+7	+7	+7	6 + Int mod	**Young**, +2 Str, acid breath 6d6, +10 natural armor
17	12d12	+12	+8	+8	+8	6 + Int mod	Feat, +2 Wis, natural armor +11
18	13d12	+13	+8	+8	+8	6 + Int mod	+2 Int, +2 Cha, acid breath 7d6
19	13d12	+13	+8	+8	+8	—	+2 Con, acid breath 8d6, natural armor +12
20	14d12	+14	+9	+9	+9	6 + Int mod	**Juvenile**, +2 Str, spells (1st), natural armor +13

Black Dragon

Dragon (Water)

Among the most hate-filled and evil dragons, black dragons have little patience for lesser creatures. An agitated black dragon becomes violent with little provocation. For more information about black dragons, consult the *Monster Manual* and the *Draconomicon.*

Racial Traits

- Starting Ability Score Adjustment: +2 Con, –2 Int, –2 Cha.
- Water Subtype: A black dragon is as at home in the water as it is on land. It can breathe both water and air.
- Tiny: As Tiny creatures, wyrmling black dragons gain a +2 size bonus to Armor Class, a +2 size bonus on attack rolls, and a +8 size bonus on Hide checks, but they must use smaller weapons than Medium creatures do, and their lifting and carrying limits are one-half those of Medium characters. Wyrmling black dragons have a space of 2-1/2 feet by 2-1/2 feet and a reach of 0 feet, which means they must enter an opponent's square to attack in melee combat and draw an attack of opportunity when doing so.
- Black dragon starting base land speed is 20 feet. They also have a swim speed of 20 feet. Note that having a swim speed gives black dragons a +8 racial bonus on Swim checks to perform a special action or avoid a hazard in the water.
- Immunity to Acid: A black dragon takes no damage from acid.

Additional Class Skills

In addition to the class skills all dragons have, a black dragon's class skills (and the key ability for each) are Hide (Dex), Move Silently (Dex), and Swim (Str).

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the black dragon monster class.

Feats: A black dragon receives one feat at 1st level and additional feats at 4th, 9th, 12th, 15th, and 20th level.

Water Breathing (Ex): A black dragon can breathe underwater indefinitely and can freely use its breath weapons, spells, and other abilities while submerged.

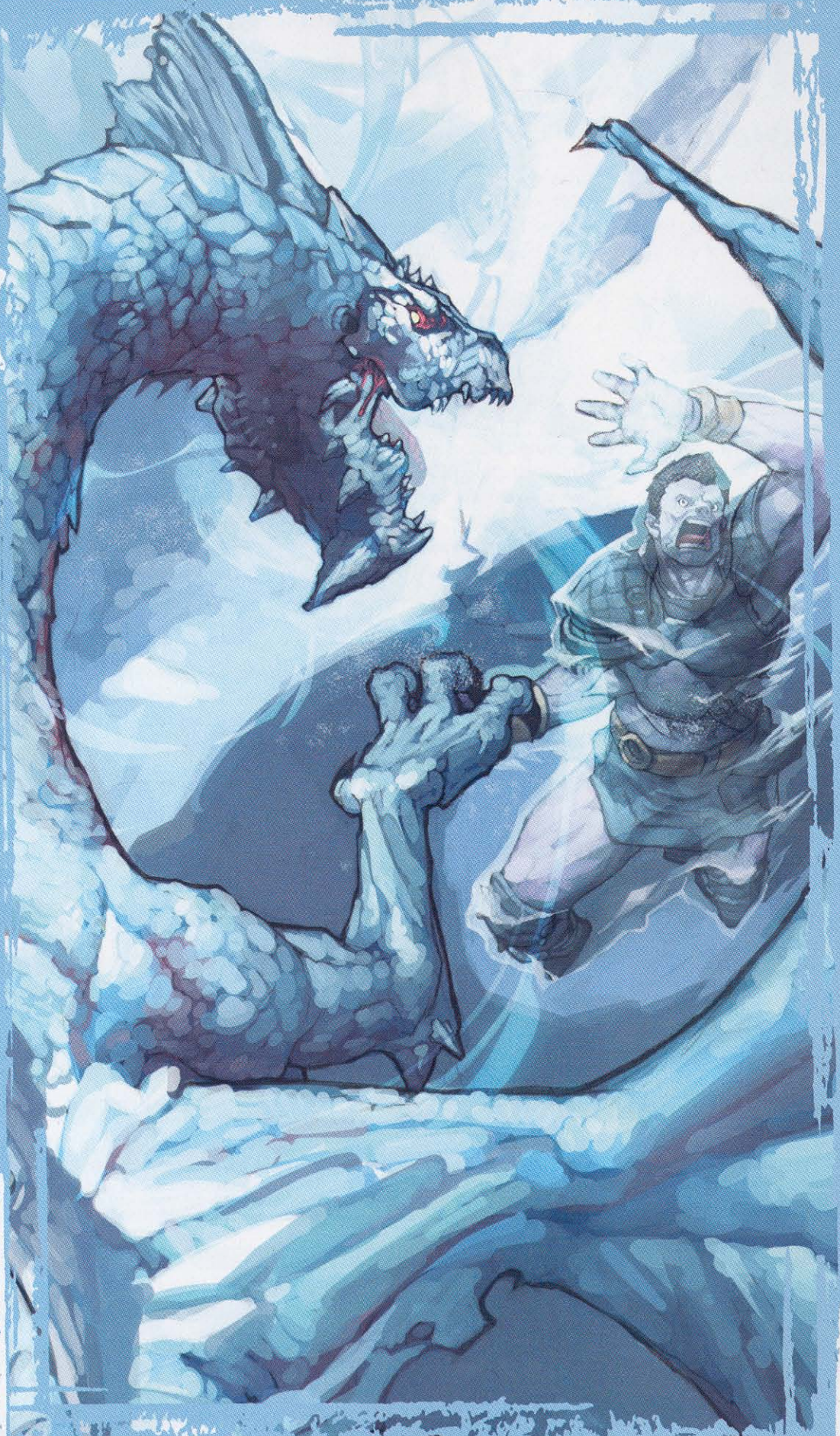
Breath Weapon (Su): A black dragon has one type of breath weapon, a line of acid.

Spell-Like Ability: Beginning at 16th level, the black dragon can cast *darkness* three times per day. Caster level 3rd. The save is Charisma-based.

Spell Resistance (Ex): At 19th level, the black dragon gains spell resistance 17.

BLACK DRAGON

Level	Hit Dice	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Skill Points	Special
1	1d12	+1	+2	+2	+2	(6 + Int mod) x 4	Feat, bite 1d4, 2 claws 1d3, water breathing
2	2d12	+2	+3	+3	+3	6 + Int mod	+1 natural armor
3	2d12	+2	+3	+3	+3	—	Speed 40 ft., swim 40 ft.
4	3d12	+3	+3	+3	+3	6 + Int mod	Feat, fly 50 ft. (average), acid breath 1d4
5	3d12	+3	+a3	+3	+3	—	Blindsense, +2 natural armor
6	4d12	+4	+4	+4	+4	6 + Int mod	Speed 60 ft., fly 100 ft. (average), swim 60 ft.
7	4d12	+4	+4	+4	+4	6 + Int mod	**Wyrmling**, acid breath 2d4, +3 natural armor
8	5d12	+5	+4	+4	+4	6 + Int mod	+2 Str, +4 natural armor
9	6d12	+6	+5	+5	+5	6 + Int mod	Feat, acid breath 4d4, +5 natural armor
10	7d12	+7	+5	+5	+5	6 + Int mod	**Very Young**, Small size, bite 1d6, claws 1d4, +6 natural armor
11	8d12	+8	+6	+6	+6	6 + Int mod	+2 Int, +2 Cha, acid breath 6d4, +7 natural armor
12	9d12	+9	+6	+6	+6	6 + Int mod	Feat, +2 Str, +2 Con, fly 150 ft. (poor), +8 natural armor
13	10d12	+10	+7	+7	+7	6 + Int mod	**Young**, Medium size, bite 1d8, claws 1d6, 2 wings 1d4, +9 natural armor
14	11d12	+11	+7	+7	+7	6 + Int mod	Acid breath 7d4
15	12d12	+12	+8	+8	+8	6 + Int mod	Feat, +10 natural armor
16	13d12	+13	+8	+8	+8	6 + Int mod	Acid breath 8d4, *darkness* 3/day, +11 natural armor
17	13d12	+13	+8	+8	+8	—	**Juvenile**, +2 Str, +12 natural armor
18	14d12	+14	+9	+9	+9	6 + Int mod	+2 Cha, spells (1st)
19	14d12	+14	+9	+9	+9	—	+2 Con, +2 Wis, SR 17, +13 natural armor
20	15d12	+15	+9	+9	+9	6 + Int mod	Feat, +2 Int, +14 natural armor



White Dragon

Dragon (Cold)

Feral and relatively stupid, white dragons nonetheless possess a predator's cunning and instinctual tactical knowledge. They often attack a problem (literally) with single-minded ferocity. For more information about white dragons, consult the *Monster Manual* and the *Draconomicon*.

Racial Traits

- Starting Ability Score Adjustment: +2 Con, –4 Int, –4 Cha.
- Cold Subtype: White dragons have immunity to cold. They take half again as much damage (+50%) as normal from fire damage, regardless of whether a saving throw is allowed, or if the save is a success or failure.
- Tiny: Wyrmling white dragons are Tiny, and have the same size traits as their black dragon cousins.
- White dragon starting base land speed is 20 feet, and a burrow speed of 20 feet. They also have a swim speed of 20 feet. Note that having a swim speed gives black dragons a +8 racial bonus on Swim checks to perform a special action or avoid a hazard in the water.

Additional Class Skills

In addition to the class skills all dragons have, a white dragon's class skills (and the key ability for each) are Hide (Dex), Move Silently (Dex), and Swim (Str).

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the white dragon monster class.

Feats: A white dragon receives one feat at 1st level and additional feats at 5th, 8th, 12th, and 17th level.

Icewalking (Ex): Beginning at 2nd level, a white dragon can climb on icy surfaces (only) as if under the effect of a *spider climb* spell. This ability is always in effect.

Breath Weapon (Su): A white dragon has one type of breath weapon, a cone of cold.

Spell-Like Ability: Beginning at 14th level, the white dragon can cast *fog cloud* three times per day. Caster level 4th.

Spell Resistance (Ex): At 19th level, the white dragon gains spell resistance 16.

WHITE DRAGON

Level	Hit Dice	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Skill Points	Special
1	1d12	+1	+2	+2	+2	(6 + Int mod) x 4	Feat, bite 1d4, 2 claws 1d3
2	2d12	+2	+3	+3	+3	6 + Int mod	Fly 100 ft. (average), icewalking
3	2d12	+2	+3	+3	+3	—	Speed 40 ft., swim 40 ft., +1 natural armor
4	3d12	+3	+3	+3	+3	6 + Int mod	Burrow 30 ft., fly 150 ft. (average), cold breath 1d6
5	3d12	+3	+3	+3	+3	—	**Wyrmling**, Feat, speed 60 ft., swim 60 ft., blindsense, +2 natural armor
6	4d12	+4	+4	+4	+4	6 + Int mod	+2 Str, +3 natural armor
7	5d12	+5	+4	+4	+4	6 + Int mod	Cold breath 2d6, +4 natural armor
8	6d12	+6	+5	+5	+5	6 + Int mod	Feat, +5 natural armor
9	6d12	+6	+5	+5	+5	—	**Very Young**, Small size, bite 1d6, claws 1d4
10	7d12	+7	+5	+5	+5	6 + Int mod	+2 Con, cold breath 3d6, +6 natural armor
11	8d12	+8	+6	+6	+6	6 + Int mod	+2 Str, fly 200 ft. (poor), +7 natural armor
12	9d12	+9	+6	+6	+6	6 + Int mod	**Young**, Medium size, feat, bite 1d8, claws 1d6, 2 wings 1d4, +8 natural armor
13	10d12	+10	+7	+7	+7	6 + Int mod	+2 Cha, +9 natural armor
14	10d12	+10	+7	+7	+7	—	+2 Int, *fog cloud*
15	11d12	+11	+7	+7	+7	6 + Int mod	Cold breath 4d6, +10 natural armor
16	11d12	+11	+7	+7	+7	—	+2 Str
17	12d12	+12	+8	+8	+8	6 + Int mod	**Juvenile**, feat, +11 natural armor
18	13d12	+13	+8	+8	+8	6 + Int mod	+2 Cha, +12 natural armor
19	14d12	+14	+9	+9	+9	6 + Int mod	Cold breath 5d6, SR 16
20	14d12	+14	+9	+9	+9	—	+2 Con, +13 natural armor

by Keith Baker • illustrated by David Bircham

Touched by Madness

Eberron's Cults of the Dragon Below

Invariably, all creatures either embrace or question the divine. While some worship the forces of wind, soil, and water, others turn their backs on the world of nature and look for inspiration in strange and disturbing places. Some revere angels or demons, incarnations of ideals that humanity understands, icons of purest nobility and vilest evil. Others look beyond this framework of belief, seeking solace in the truly alien, the raw essence of chaos, and the aberrations that defy natural laws.

The *Eberron Campaign Setting* includes a wide variety of dark forces, but the oldest and perhaps greatest is Khyber, also known as the Dragon Below. According to legend, the world was formed during a battle between three vast dragons. The dragon Khyber slew his brother Siberys, only to be caught and bound by the dragon Eberron. Today, Eberron is seen as the world itself, and the mother of all natural creatures, while the remains of Siberys float in the heavens above. Trapped below, Khyber is the darkness within the world and the father of all the fiends that reside therein.

In the Age of Demons, many of these children of Khyber ruled the land. Today, powerful magic binds these mighty fiends to the fathomless depths. Immortal, indestructible, and possessed of nearly godlike power, these rakshasa rajahs now rage within their dragonshard prisons, waiting for their time to come again. While the dreadful desires of the rajahs often find their way into the dreams of worshipers, an explorer who ventures into Khyber need not fear encountering one of these ancient fiends. Other powers brood in the darkness of Khyber's depths, less powerful than the rajahs but every bit as terrifying.

Thousands of years ago, Khorvaire suffered a devastating incursion from Xoriat, the plane of madness. Armies of aberrations poured through the portals between the planes. Beholder eye rays and illithid mind blasts brought low many cities, and thousands of orcs and goblins fell in the first months of the attack. Many were taken alive, forced into thralldom and psychic slavery, but others faced a far worse fate. A group of powerful

beings known as the daelkyr led the invading army. These lords of madness twisted their captives in both body and soul, creating a host of warped new aberrations. Hobgoblins were transformed into dolgaunts, halflings into chokers, and goblins into dolgrims, all reshaped in the nightmare image of Xoriat. Filled with rage, self-loathing, and pure madness, these horrors massacred scores of their former kindred.

The Xoriat incursion lasted for decades, and the sprawling empire of Dhakaan was mortally wounded in this unrelenting struggle. Eventually, the Gatekeeper druids managed to sever the connection between Eberron and Xoriat and drove the daelkyr into the depths below the world's surface, finally ending the conflict.

While trapped in Khyber, the daelkyr are not physically bound and continue to create new horrors to haunt the darkness. The daelkyr cannot return to their home plane and they cannot travel to the surface of the world, but through their works they have strengthened the connection between Khyber and Xoriat. This connection makes the Underdark a realm of madness and death.

Inspired by this alien realm, the most twisted souls embrace the corruption festering within the heart of the world. Drawn together by their foul plots these murderers, madmen, and dark scholars are collectively known as the Cults of the Dragon Below.

THE RISE OF THE CULTS

The triumph of the Gatekeepers brought freedom to those goblins and orcs enslaved by the daelkyr. Unfortunately, service to those aberrant tyrants came with a heavy price, and many of these slaves were mentally scarred by the experience. Instead of rejoicing in freedom, many dreamt of a glorious and terrible world ruled by the shapers of flesh. With each generation these myths grew more elaborate and fantastic until these people found themselves worshiping the creatures that had once enslaved them. The majority of these slaves were concentrated along the west coast of Khorvaire, especially in the regions now known as Droaam and the Shadow Marches. When humans eventually came to the Shadow Marches and joined with the orc tribes, they brought their own myths, legends, and racial perspectives to these traditions. The modern Cults of the Dragon Below emerged from this fusion.

Today, dozens of sects of the Cult of the Dragon Below exist, each with a slightly different view of the world and the future. Some actively fight the Gatekeepers, seeking to shatter the wards that imprison the forces of Xoriat in the depths. Others see Khyber as the Promised Land, but the road to this glorious realm must be paved with innocent blood. Some deal directly with the forces of madness, serving mind flayers and dolgaunts as slaves, spies, and assassins. Yet these aren't the only servants of the Dragon Below. Anyone can hear the voice of madness whispering in the night, issuing strange commands and beautiful promises, allowing the power of Xoriat to touch his soul.

While each cult might worship Khyber in name, most are truly reaching out to Xoriat, allowing the plane of madness to touch their souls and twist their minds.

All it takes is one such vessel to call together a cult. Madness is often quite compelling, and cult leaders usually excel at both verbal and emotional manipulation.

MODERN CULTS

Today, the largest and oldest Cults of the Dragon Below make their homes in the Shadow Marches. The Dragon Below maintains a strong following in both the wild and isolated orc tribes and the more civilized clans, where humans and orcs join together in one community.

The tribes of the Shadow Marches possess loosely defined beliefs concerning the Dragon Below. The tribal warriors embrace madness as a path to strength, wielding rage as others use swords. Some among the tribes are born with supernatural powers—dark gifts that reflect the touch of the daelkyr so many generations ago. These gifted children often become religious leaders, with whole tribes hanging onto every word of their *jhorkaanta* (Orc for "blood sage"). While most believe these children gain their guiding power from a divine source, they actually draw it from the lingering taint of the daelkyr and their own tribe's crazed cabalistic fervor. The beliefs and goals of a Khyber tribe shift with each new generation, making these groups chaotic, unpredictable, and forces best avoided by cautious adventurers.

The human-orc clans of the Shadow Marches are more civilized, both in culture and in their approach to their religion. The clans integrally tie religion to family. Each clan believes that it alone understands the true will of the Dragon Below. This often leads to feuds between clans. Frequently, these feuds end in swift and brutal bloodletting, but some fester as subtle shadow wars that rage unseen for years. While the orc tribes possess wild and shifting beliefs, the intermixed clans firmly believe in fixed traditions handed down from one generation to the next. Age is as much a requirement for leadership as supernatural power, although the two often go hand in hand. Members of a clan cult are loyal to one another, believing that their family stands alone against the world. Only emissaries of the Dragon Below, such as mind flayers and dolgaunts, receive the same level of trust as other cult members of the same clan. The clans of the Shadow Marches, often called "Marcher clans," willingly serve these aberrations, viewing them as embodiments of their twisted beliefs.

Marcher clans occasionally send their agents across Khorvaire to propagate new sects, but a cult just as likely forms on its own accord. Powerful aberrations secretly organize some of these cults, while others come together through the pull of mad visionaries. More often than not, these groups possess few things in common. Three such cults could operate in a city with no knowledge of one another. Some crazed prophets draw recruits from the lowest dregs of society, calling on those already touched by madness or willing to accept any promise that could lead to a better life. It is possible, however, for cults to spring up anywhere—even at the highest levels of society. A king's court could be riddled with cultists, such as jaded nobles who initially considered the cult merely an amusing diversion, only to find the pull of madness irresistible. These groups are generally small and cannot call on others for assistance, but their isolated nature and lack of contact with other cults often means that the forces of Khyber are not easily purged.

CULT BELIEFS

No two Cults of the Dragon Below are exactly alike, but most revere the dark forces trapped in the depths of Khyber. Many eagerly await these powers'

MAD SCHEMES

Unorganized and unpredictable, the plots of the Cults of the Dragon Below are myriad and maniacal. Presented here is a mere sampling of the deranged schemes that hatch from the maddened minds of Kyber's faithful.

Panic in the Streets: An infectious madness is spreading throughout the city. One by one, innocent people become homicidal killers, stalking those around them and spreading the madness. The source lies in a crypt deep below the city, where cultists have awoken an illithid champion and its aberrant allies. Unless the adventurers act quickly, they too will fall prey to the blood madness!

Strange Appetites: While dining at an inn or tavern, an observant character notices that a number of the other patrons are supping on unusual fare consisting of rotted meat, live grubs, eyeballs, and blood. The innkeeper dismisses this as a local tradition, but in reality these diners are aberrant paragons, and this strange diet is a manifestation of their taint. What creature was butchered to make the meal? Has the party stumbled upon a cult of killers, or do these cultists simply wish to indulge their strange tastes in peace? Perhaps the innkeeper has plans to add the party to the larder!

The Black Book: While adventuring—possibly while fighting a cult alienist—the party comes into possession of a strange book. Both the pages and cover are made of jet-black leather. It radiates powerful universal magic and appears to be nearly indestructible. No words can be seen with the naked eye, but *read magic* reveals the terrible secrets of Xoriat within. It includes a number of cerebrotic spells (see "Enter the Far Realm" in *Dragon* #330), but the first time a character reads the text he gains a point of taint. As long as the book remains in his possession, the party is hunted by cultists and plagued by pseudonatural terrors, but letting it fall into the wrong hands could have even worse consequences!

Soul Food: A series of kidnappings puts the party on the trail of a dangerous cult. The cultists are capturing people who fit a certain profile to feed to their gibbering mouther. They believe that if the mouther isn't properly fed (or if it is killed) it might transform into a new and terrible form with the power to level cities. Are these the visions of madmen, or will the party unleash a far greater threat if they defeat the cult?

rise from the darkness and inevitable reshaping of the world. Others hope to join their lords in Draaka'tarn, a mythical promised land deep below the surface. Some seek power in the current age, believing that serving Khyber grants them dominion over those around them. Many cultists never learn of Xoriat or the daelkyr, and create elaborate fantasies to justify their beliefs and powers. Others idolize and worship a single daelkyr, such as Belashyrra, Lord of Eyes; Dyrrn the Corruptor; or Bloody Kyrzinand, and know nothing about the others. Only time will tell which of these sinister supposed deities actually exist and which are figments of madness.

Yet, for all of these differences, most cultists share a few common qualities. The typical cultist displays two or three of the following traits.

Sociopathic Behavior: Over time, a cultist loses his capacity for empathy and compassion. A cultist feels no connection to other members of his race. Defined by his devotion, those who do not share the cultist's beliefs mean little more to him than insects. Such a cultist is willing to steal or murder without a second thought. The cultist simply cannot identify with those around him and sees nothing wrong with treating them as pawns or tools to be used and discarded.

Love of the Alien: A cultist possesses a warped and twisted sense of beauty, made so by the visions he sees in his mind. Most people find aberrations horrifying, but a cultist views a gibbering mouther or mind flayer as a vision of the world to come. Most cultists develop a deep fascination with aberrations. They feel an innate compulsion to serve intelligent aberrations, such as beholders, illithids, and nagas, and often keep lesser aberrations as guardians or pets. Symbionts and grafts, considered the greatest treasure a cult can possess, place the bearer one step closer to the creatures he admires.

Mental Instability: Sociopaths fill the ranks of most cults, but madness takes many forms. Often, a specific strain of madness works its way through a particular cult. This could manifest as paranoia, schizophrenia,

SAMPLE CULT: THE IR'EDAR BROOD

Count Jaskar ir'Edar of Aundair was a man with an adventurous spirit. He traveled across the Talenta Plains, delved into the depths of the Eldeen Reaches, and even led an expedition into the Demon Wastes. His peers came to expect eccentric behavior from the count, but even they were surprised when he married Nola Turaash, a half-orc who served as his guide in the Shadow Marches. Yet despite his strange behavior, Jaskar was a man of wealth, and whisperers said that his less-than-lovely bride was heir to a vast fortune in dragonshards.

Whatever the source of their fortune, Jaskar and his children prospered. Over the course of centuries the family gained even greater prestige and power. Today, one of Jaskar's descendents, Jalnar ir'Edar, is duke of the city of Passage. Having studied magic at Arcanix, Jalnar frequently used his powers to defend the city against Thrane knights and Eldeen rebels. Over the last decade, however, he has become increasingly reclusive, often sending his eldest daughter to conduct affairs of state in his place. Some fear he has fallen ill. Others believe he was worn down by the horrors of the war and seeks solace in the solitude of his library.

The truth is far worse. In the final years of the war, Jalnar found himself in the grip of an irrational fear. He felt a desperate need to tap new sources of mystical power, to find some way to protect his city from its enemies. He began to have disturbing dreams, and following one of these visions he uncovered a secret chamber in his ancestral manor—a room filled with strange texts and odd relics. Nola Tuurash was a child of the Dragon Below, and her tainted blood ran in his veins. Through this corrupt heritage, he could gain the power he sought.

Over the last ten years, Jalnar was drawn deeper down the path of the Cult of the Dragon Below. In his twisted mind, he does what is best for Aundair, believing that if he can adapt the dark lore of his ancestors, he can lead the battle to reclaim the Eldeen Reaches, possibly even reunite Galifar itself. Having drawn a host of followers to his cult, Jalnar engages in strange experiments and slowly gathers his own army of savage aberrations.

At the moment, the Passage cult consists of approximately 60 people. The group is led by Jalnar ir'Edar (NE male aberration conjurer 5/alienist 6/aberrant paragon 3, cerebrant [see "Enter the Far Realm" in *Dragon* #330]); his sinister studies have made him one of the most powerful wizards in Aundair, though few know of his skills. Jalnar's exposure to the taint of Khyber has afflicted him with a hideous rotting skin condition, and he remains in his mansion to hide this horrible affliction. His daughter, Melys ir'Edar (NE female human conjurer 5/alienist 1/aberrant paragon 2) manages the affairs of Passage on his behalf. As for the other members of the sect, Jalnar's experiments tapped into inner reserves of rage and madness, causing many of his followers to gain barbarian, wilder, or soulknife levels. As such, Passage is filled with unpleasant surprises. The plump innkeeper or crippled beggar might be a barbarian 5/soulknife 1 and could fly into a murderous rage at any moment, lashing out with a blade formed from blood.

There are many ways a party could encounter the ir'Edar brood. While traveling through Passage, they could be attacked by a crazed farmer-turned-barbarian or encounter a pseudonatural creature (see the template in *Complete Arcane*) that has escaped from Jalnar's lab. Adventurers could discover a ruin dating back to the war against the daelkyr, but Jalnar's cultists are also present scouring the dungeon for artifacts. A wizard could be asked to spy on Jalnar on behalf of an increasingly suspicious arcane congress. Perhaps Jalnar achieves a power great enough that he seeks to conquer the Eldeen Reaches, and the party must ally with the Gatekeepers to battle a new wave of unnatural horrors.

or even multiple personality disorders. Such insanity often takes the form of a fervent belief in something that is patently ridiculous such as, "If I kill enough people, the spilled blood will extinguish the sun." Once truly self-deluded no force on Eberron can convince a cultist of his irrationality.

Unpredictable Behavior: Cults of the Dragon Below serve only madness. Possessing thoughts impossible for sane minds to comprehend, such cults should never be as predictable as other conspiracies or cabals. This is doubly true of those cults guided by aberrations. Emissaries of the realm of madness, such monstrosities think in ways unlike any other creatures adventurers might have encountered. An aberration might send its servants on seemingly meaningless quests, such as collecting bent copper pieces, the first toenails of young children, or even the ears of opposing cult members. The question adventurers must ask is whether these strange actions serve some higher purpose invisible to sane minds, or whether they are simply the fits and ravings of madness.

The Children of Khyber

Cults of the Dragon Below accept members from all classes. Cult devotion is an excellent way to explain the abilities of a particular PC or NPC. Although not all of the classes are covered here, the following represent the most common classes possessed by cultists.

In addition, the rules for taint presented on page 189 of *Unearthed Arcana* work exceptionally well when applied to those touched by Xoriat (especially the aberrant paragon presented later in this article). Players and DMs interested in adding extra depth to characters corrupted by this alien realm should consider these rules.

Adepts and Clerics

Favored souls are more common among the cults than adepts and clerics as few cultists possess an interest in devoting themselves to serious religious study. However, a cleric who hears the whispers of Xoriat might convert to the Dragon Below. More focused than their sorcerer and favored soul counterparts, clerics of the Dragon Below are among the most active in seeking to free their hidden masters. These clerics frequently choose the Dragon Below domain (see the *Eberron Campaign Setting*), enhancing their ability to summon allies and providing them with a wide range of magic weaponry. In the Eberron setting, adepts may also select one cleric domain, although they do not gain bonus spells. As a result, a crazed rabble-rouser could be an adept of the Dragon Below with the Madness domain.

Alienists

The path of the wizard requires lucid, devoted study, and few of these scholars embrace the darkness of the Dragon Below. Exceptions occur, however, most notably being those who take the alienist prestige class presented in *Complete Arcane*. In Eberron, Xoriat fills the role of the Far Realm. Those who follow this path of magic seek to unlock the secrets of Xoriat and Khyber itself. Often solitary, alienists see little benefit in joining cults, but sometimes start them at the bidding of some force of madness.

Barbarians

A true warrior of the Dragon Below allows the madness of Khyber to guide his hands in battle. This savage rage grants tremendous strength at the cost of any thought of personal safety. While most barbarians devoted to the Cults of the Dragon Below dwell within the orc tribes of the Shadow Marches, some of these crazed berserkers also reside in civilized areas. The powers and limitations of the class are not the result of growing up in a barbaric

INVOKING THE DRAGON BELOW

The warlock is a new core class presented in *Complete Arcane*. A warlock attached to the Cults of the Dragon Below does not draw his power from a fiendish bargain; instead, his unnatural nature and powers are a direct result of his bond to Xoriat, which slowly grows over time.

At the DM's discretion, a warlock who draws his powers from the Dragon Below could gain DR/byeshk instead of DR/cold iron. Many creatures associated with Xoriat are vulnerable to weapons forged from byeshk, and this better reflects the warlock's connection to this plane.

The voice of madness is a new invocation developed by many warlocks that look to the Cult of the Dragon Below for power.

Voice of Madness

Least; 2nd

You can use *lesser confusion*, as the spell. However, the duration is increased by 1 round for every two caster levels that you possess. If you are a follower of the Cults of the Dragon Below, the saving throw DC is increased by 1.

environment, but rather a reflection of the madness raging in the soul of the character. Such a Khyber-influenced barbarian is less likely to possess ranks in nature-oriented skills, instead focusing on physical skills, Intimidate, and Listen.

FAVORED SOULS, SORCERERS, AND WARLOCKS

The orc tribes of the Shadow Marches do not study magic as wizards do or engage in the organized worship that characterizes clerics. Many of the children of these savage tribes possess innate supernatural powers—a dark legacy dating back to the daelkyr's reign of terror. Among the more integrated Marcher clans, mystical skills passed from the orc bloodlines into the human gene pool. Even those with no contact to the Shadow Marches might develop sinister gifts as a result of their devotion. All three of these classes are highly appropriate for the Cults of the Dragon Below, and this is one of the most likely places for warlocks to appear in EBERRON.

Sorcerers and favored souls who follow the Cults of the Dragon Below usually develop aggressive powers related to transmutation and enchantment—forcing their will on others or twisting flesh as the daelkyr do.

PSYCHIC WARRIORS, SOULKNIVES, AND WILDERS

All mortal minds possess a bond to Xoriat, and those who embrace madness find the ability to unlock powers similar to mind flayers and other abberations. The wilder is the archetypical psionic cultist, allowing her fury and madness to unleash her inner powers. The soulknife forms her weaponry out of the very essence of madness. When dealing with psionic characters who draw their power from Xoriat a DM should emphasize the disturbing nature of these abilities. Any visible manifestation of a power, including a soulknife's mind blade, seems especially unnatural. A mind blade might appear made from sore-encrusted flesh, solid blood, or a horde of biting insects. This does not change the effects of the power, but observers know they are dealing with the unnatural.

FEATS OF MADNESS

Followers of the Dragon Below draw strange strength from the depths of their disturbed minds.

COMFORTING MADNESS [GENERAL]

You have learned to live with the chaos of your own mind, and no mortal magic can match the disturbing visions of Xoriat.

Prerequisite: Devotion to the Cult of the Dragon Below.

Benefit: You are immune to any spell or effect that causes confusion or insanity. You are not affected by *feeblemind*.

Special: If you abandon your faith in the Dragon Below, you lose the benefits of this feat.

COMPELLING MADNESS [GENERAL]

Your tormented psyche weakens your willpower, but you are able to project maddening visions upon your victims to lower their resistance to your mental powers.

Prerequisite: Devotion to the Cult of the Dragon Below.

Benefit: The saving throw DC of any mind-affecting spell or power that you cast or manifest is increased by +1. However, you take a –2 penalty on all Will saves.

Special: If you abandon your faith in the Dragon Below, you lose the benefits of this feat.

DISTURBING SPELL [GENERAL]

You can channel the power of Xoriat to enhance your spells, but this takes a terrible toll on your mind.

Prerequisite: Devotion to the Cult of the Dragon Below, ability to spontaneously cast spells.

Benefit: When you apply a metamagic feat to a spontaneous spell, you may take Wisdom damage instead of increasing the level of the spell slot used by the spell. You take 1 point of Wisdom damage for each spell slot level. For example, using Silent Spell would cause you to take 1 point of Wisdom damage. You may only use

ABERRANT PARAGON CLASS SKILLS

The aberrant paragon's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Diplomacy (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (dungeoneering) (Int), Knowledge (the planes) (Int), Move Silently (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Survival (Wis).

Skill Points per Level: 2 + Int modifier.

THE ABERRANT PARAGON

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Class Abilites
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Darkvision 60 ft.	+1 level
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Ability modification (+2), unnatural	—
3rd	+2	+1	+1	+3	Aberrant apotheosis, darkvision 120 ft.	+1 level

this to offset the increased spell slot level of a single feat per casting, and you cannot cast a spell if the increased spell slot level would place it above your ability to cast—for example, a 6th-level sorcerer cannot cast a silent *fireball* through the use of this feat. Wisdom damage dealt by this feat can only be healed naturally at the rate of 1 per day. Magical healing has no effect. You cannot use this feat if the damage would lower your Wisdom below 1.

Special: If you abandon your faith in the Dragon Below, you lose the benefits of this feat.

GIFT OF XORIAT [GENERAL]

You are a vessel for the power of the plane of Madness and you can use this gift to twist the minds of others.

Prerequisite: Devotion to the Cult of the Dragon Below.

Benefit: Your bond to Xoriat grants you the following spell-like abilities as a 1st-level caster: 1/day—*daze, lesser confusion, lullaby.* Save DC 10 + spell level + Cha modifier.

Special: If you abandon your faith in the Dragon Below, you lose the benefits of this feat.

KHYBER'S FURY [GENERAL]

Your insane rage increases your Strength to astonishing levels, but you pay no heed to your own safety.

Prerequisite: Devotion to the Cult of the Dragon Below, ability to rage or frenzy.

Benefit: Increase the Strength bonus you receive from rage or frenzy by +2; for example, as a 1st-level barbarian you would gain a +6 bonus to Strength while raging. However, the Armor Class penalty is increased to –4. You cannot choose to voluntarily end your rage; you must remain enraged for the full duration of the effect.

Special: If you abandon your faith in the Dragon Below, you lose the benefits of this feat.

TOUCH OF MADNESS [GENERAL]

Your bond with Xoriat strengthens your madness-spawned magic. If you touch your victim, you can let this power flow into it, enhancing the effect of your spells.

Prerequisite: Devotion to the Cult of the Dragon Below, ability to cast a spell, manifest a psionic power, or use a spell-like ability that confuses its target.

Benefit: When you make use of a spell, psionic power, or spell-like ability that causes the confused condition, you may chose to deliver it as a touch attack instead of a ranged attack. If this touch attack succeeds, your caster level and the save DC are both increased by +2.

Special: If you abandon your faith in the Dragon Below, you lose the benefits of this feat.

THE ABERRANT PARAGON

Just as mortal spirits travel to the plane of Dal Quor when they sleep, all mortals possess a primal bond to Xoriat. The followers of the Dragon Below call upon this link for strength, but gaining the power of Xoriat comes at a terrible price. A character who draws on the power of madness undergoes a mental and physical transformation, slowly becoming one of the aberrations she reveres.

Normally, characters can only take levels in a paragon class corresponding to the character's race. However, taking levels in this class represents a primal change in the character's race, forever tying her to Xoriat. A character who pursues this path is known as an aberrant paragon. Levels in this class might represent a conscious decision on the part of the character or the slow seduction of Xoriat's whispers. Any character can become an aberrant paragon but cannot possess or later take levels in any other paragon class. Taking this class represents the character abandoning her original race to embrace the darkness. A character cannot take aberrant paragon as her first class level.

Abilities: An aberrant paragon can come from any background and follow any number of different paths. As a result, the ideal abilities of the paragon are tied to the classes possessed before being touched by darkness. A sorcerer or warlock might want to continue to develop her sinister Charisma, while a crazed barbarian might follow this path to enhance his Strength and Constitution.

Alignment: Aberrant paragons cannot be lawful or good. The majority tends toward chaotic and evil alignments.

CLASS FEATURES

The aberrant paragon is slowly corrupted by her connection to dark powers. In time, she becomes something completely unnatural, an aberration as horrible in her own way as a dolgaunt or mind flayer.

Class Abilities: The power of Xoriat flows through the aberrant paragon, enhancing mental and magical ability. If the paragon has levels in one of the listed classes she can channel this power to enhance certain class features. At 1st and 3rd level, an aberrant paragon with levels in one of the listed classes can select a single class and gain the specified benefits. Only these aspects of the chosen class are affected; the paragon does not gain access to any other class features or benefits.

- An alienist, cleric, favored soul, or sorcerer adds this class level when determining caster level, spells known, and spells per day. Divine casters only receive this benefit if they worship the Dragon Below.
- A barbarian adds this class level to her barbarian level to determine both the number of uses of rage per day and other rage abilities such as greater rage and tireless rage.
- A psychic warrior or wilder adds this class level when determining manifester level, power points per day, and powers known.
- A soulknife adds this class level to determine the enhancement bonus of her mind blade.
- A warlock adds this class level to determine the power of her eldritch blast and the caster level of her invocations.

If the paragon does not possess levels in any of these classes, she gains no benefit from this ability.

Darkvision (Ex): Over time, the paragon's shifting physiology affects her vision. At 1st level, an aberrant paragon gains darkvision with a range of 60 feet. At 3rd level, the range increases to 120 feet. If the character already possesses darkvision, she adds half this value to the range of her existing darkvision.

Ability Boost: Aberrant paragons progress down one of two paths. Some gain an unnatural charm and ability to influence people, a magnetism that belies the horror that lies beneath the skin. Others gain tremendous strength at the cost of their sanity, as the savage madness of Xoriat grows too difficult to conceal. At 2nd level, a character chooses one of the following options: add +2 to Charisma or add +2 to Strength and subtract –2 from Charisma.

Unnatural (Ex): Animals and other natural creatures sense the unnatural nature of the aberrant paragon. From 2nd level on, the paragon suffers a racial penalty on Handle Animal and wild empathy checks. This penalty equals the character's paragon level. In addition, unfriendly animals might become hostile without warning.

Aberrant Apotheosis (Su): At 3rd level, an aberrant paragon's type changes to aberration. He becomes immune to spells and effects that specifically target humanoids, gains darkvision out to 60 feet, and gains a +2 racial bonus to his Constitution score.

PLAYING A CULTIST

To worship the Dragon Below is to walk the path toward insanity. There are many ways to play a character who belongs to one of the Cults of the Dragon Below. When creating characters tainted by Xoriat consider the following ideas.

The Tormented Sorcerer: As a sorcerer, warlock, or wilder, you discover that the true source of your power lies in Xoriat. As you use your magic, the siren song of madness grows ever stronger, possibly represented by levels in the aberrant paragon class. You don't want to worship the Dragon Below, but you are beginning to hear whispers in the night, and the call of Xoriat is harder and harder to resist.

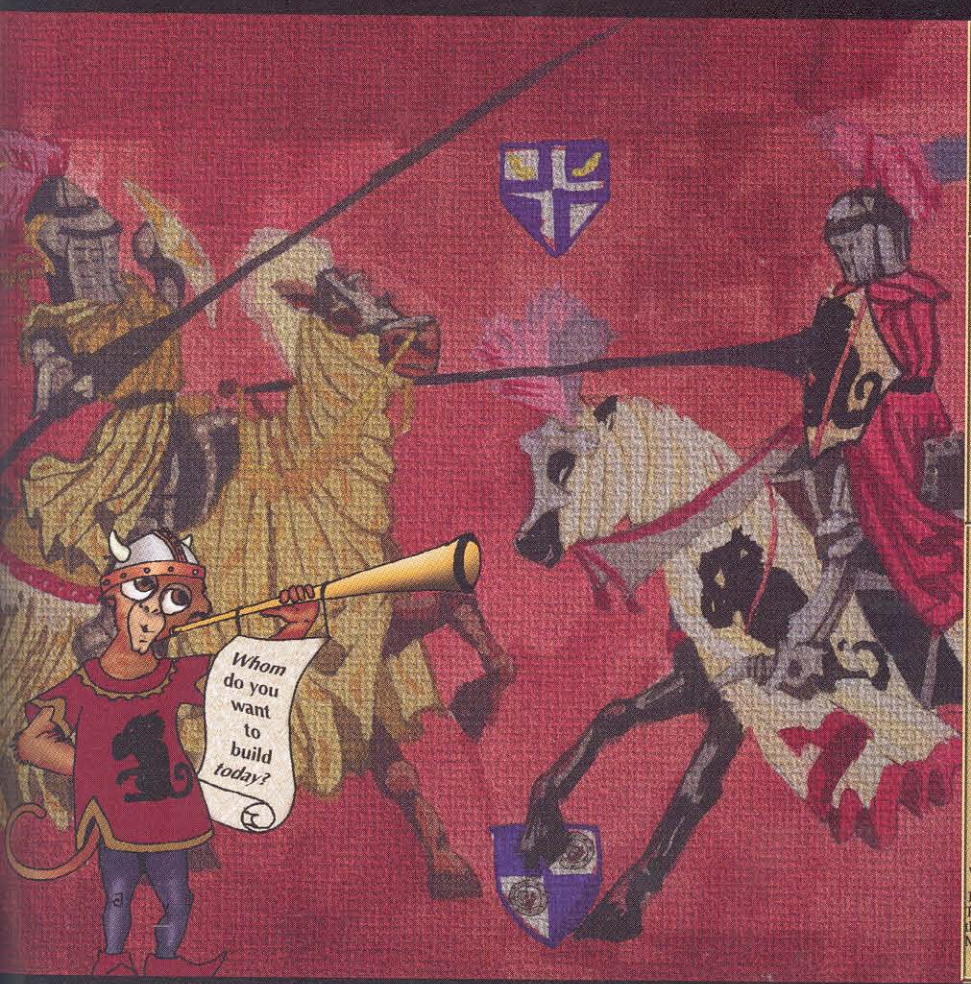
A Family Affair: You come from the Shadow Marches and were born into a cult family. You learned the ways of Khyber in your youth, and they are an important part of your identity. When you left the marches, you learned enough to realize that the more extreme aspects of your religion—such as feeding visitors to the gibbering mouther in the basement—are wrong. Unfortunately, you find it hard to shake the beliefs of the cult. You work to temper your murderous and sociopathic impulses and to fit in with normal society.

Curiosity Killed the Shifter: After discovering an ancient text or receiving a vision from Xoriat you developed an unhealthy fascination with the Dragon Below. Where some seek to escape their fates, you search for a way to strengthen your ties to Khyber. You refuse to believe that the power of Xoriat corrupts all that it touches, certain that it is simply a matter of knowledge and willpower. With all that you have learned, you believe it possible to channel this power for a noble cause.

Champions of Madness: You seek to earn your passage to a glorious paradise that you believe lies deep within Khyber. Accompanied by a constant chorus of silent voices and schizophrenic visions, you believe that the spirits of your family and loved ones follow you and that these souls can only find paradise if you take them there. To reach paradise you must win a mighty victory over the forces of evil, so you play the role of the hero, battling demons and monsters alongside your fellow adventurers. While your actions serve the cause of good, your methods might disturb your companions.

ADAPTING THE CULTS

Khyber and Xoriat are unique to the *Eberron Campaign Setting*. However, Xoriat has much in common with the Far Realm, which is mentioned in the *Manual of the Planes*, *Unearthed Arcana*, and recently given an expansive treatment in Dragon #330. The Cults of the Dragon Below can easily become disciples of the Far Realm, sects seduced by the secret lore of the alienist and the terrible wonders that lie outside mortal comprehension. Their twisted sects can easily slip into the shadows of the Underdark and behind the curtains of civilization in both the Forgotten Realms and Greyhawk settings.



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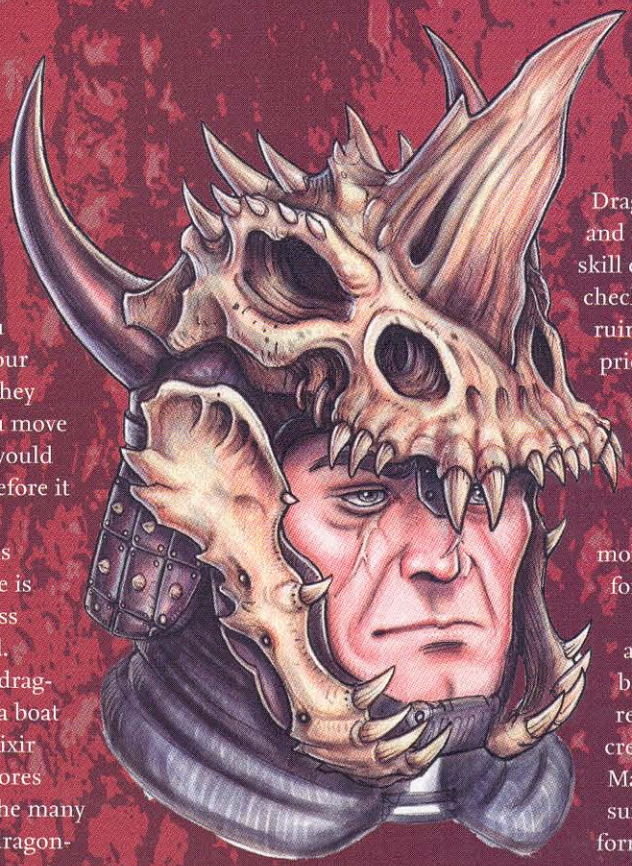
by Andrew Coleman • illustrated by Tom Fowler and Jeff Carlisle

CUTTING UP THE DRAGON

USEFUL BITS FROM FORMIDABLE FOES



Having slain the mighty dragon, whose body now lays in the middle of the town square, the mayor and other town elders shower you with parties and lavish gifts for your heroic deeds. The next morning they make one final request before you move on to your next adventure: They would like you to get rid of the corpse before it fouls up the town.

Usually, disposing of the slain is handled off scene. Digging a grave is not the work of adventurers, unless there is some benefit to be gained. While most adventurers know of dragonhide armor, few ever dream of a boat made from dragon bones or an elixir of dragon blood. This article explores optional rules covering some of the many uses for a dead wyrm, including dragoncraft items and new power components.

DRAGONCRAFT ITEMS

Dragoncraft items are nonmagical items made from the bodies of true dragons. Fashioning such items requires the Dragoncrafter feat (see sidebar) and an appropriate DC 25 Craft skill check. As with all such Craft checks, failing by 5 or more ruins your raw materials. All prices listed here represent the cost to purchase a finished item and help you determine the crafting time for the item. See page 116 of the *Draconomicon* for more information and options for dragoncraft items.

Most dragons die as the result of a ferocious battle, so sometimes little remains to be used in the creation of dragoncraft items. Many a dragon hunter (barely) survives a fight with such a formidable beast only to discover that the body part he so desperately wanted was destroyed during the battle. The DM should determine whether or not a particular body part survived. Unless *disintegrated*, at least some parts of the dragon should remain intact.

In addition, those wishing to make good use of a dead dragon must succeed at a Survival check. This represents harvesting your kill in the wild. The DC and time required for this check varies depending upon the part to be harvested, as noted in the following descriptions. Failing a Survival check by 5 or more means you have rendered the part useless. All Survival checks assume the work is done within an hour of the dragon's death. A –2 penalty applies on all Survival checks made after the first hour, with an additional –2 penalty per day after that. Spells such as *gentle repose* can greatly extend the amount of time before the beast begins to rot and these penalties accrue.

Dragonbone Boat: The bones and skull of a size Large or larger dragon can be used to construct the framing for a boat. Such construction also requires almost all the scales and both wings of the dragon. Making a boat leaves nothing available to make a suit of dragonhide armor, shield, or any other dragoncraft item with the following exceptions: The blood, fundamentum, heart, and vocal cords can all be harvested from a dragon without ruining the parts needed to create a boat. Harvesting a dragon for this purpose takes a minimum of 2 hours, with an additional 2 hours for each size category of the dragon greater than Large. The bones and scales of a Large or Huge dragon require a DC 20 Survival check to harvest. The same task performed on a Gargantuan or Colossal dragon requires a DC 25 Survival check.

Dragon Size	Boat Size	Capacity/Cargo	Cost	Speed
Large	Rowboat	3 Medium creatures/1,000 lb.	8,000 gp	2 mph
Huge	Scully Boat	8 Medium creatures/2 tons	15,000 gp	1.5 mph
Gargantuan	Knarr	20 Medium creatures/9 tons	30,000 gp	1 mph
Colossal	Keelboat	40 Medium creatures/40 tons	60,000 gp	1 mph

The DM might rule that a dragon carcass is unsuitable for use in creating a dragonbone boat of the usual size due to the damage dealt to the creature in combat. This damage might reduce the largest size of boat that can be made from the carcass. All boats made from dragon bones and scales have hardness 10 and energy resistance 10 against the element the dragon was immune to. This provides no bonus to anyone in the boat unless the boat provides total cover. The overall hit point total for any given section of the boat increases by 50%. See the keelboat statistics on page 52 of the *Arms and Equipment Guide*.

Crafting a boat made from dragon parts requires a DC 25 Craft (shipmaking) check. A Craft (shipmaking) check failed by 5 or more destroys enough material that you must treat the dragon's body as one size category smaller for the purposes of what size boat can be created. The cost of the carcass represents one-third the final cost of the boat. Any remaining cost represents additional raw materials needed to complete the item.

DRAGONBONE BOAT ENHANCEMENTS

Frequently, dragonbone boats include numerous enhancements. Additional powers must be added by a spellcaster who meets the prerequisites. Note that due to the special materials needed to create these enhancements, crafters pay only half the normal XP cost for adding these enhancements to a dragonbone boat.

Elemental Breath: Once per day, the dragonbone boat can use a breath weapon at the command of the boat's pilot. This breath originates from the skull of the dragon but can be aimed in any direction from that point. The type of breath weapon and spell required to create this enhancement is noted on the following chart.

Dragon Type	Breath Weapon	Requirement
Black	80 ft. line of acid	*Melf's acid arrow*
Blue	80 ft. line of electricity	*lightning bolt*
Green	40 ft. cone of acid	*acid fog*
Red	40 ft. cone of fire	*fireball*
White	40 ft. cone of cold	*cone of cold*
Brass	80 ft. line of fire	*scorching ray*
Bronze	80 ft. line of electricity	*lightning bolt*
Copper	80 ft. line of acid	*Melf's acid arrow*
Gold	40 ft. cone of fire	*fireball*
Silver	40 ft. cone of cold	*cone of cold*

This breath weapon deals 10d6 points of damage and allows a DC 17 Reflex save for half damage.

Moderate evocation or conjuration; CL 10th; Craft Wondrous Item, varies; Price +16,000 gp.

Enhanced Vision: An aura of draconic alertness surrounds the skull of the dragonbone boat. Anyone standing at the prow near the dragon's head receives a +10 competence bonus on Spot checks.

Faint divination; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, *clairaudience/clairvoyance;* Price +10,000 gp.

Speed Sails: The natural draconic skill at travelling in a variety of environments lingers within these sails. A dragonbone boat built with this enhancement travels on water at twice the listed speed for a boat of its size.

Moderate transmutation; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, *gust of wind;* Price +12,000 gp.

Soar Sails: A dragonbone boat equipped with these special sails can actually leave the water behind and fly through the sky. Boats built with soar sails have a fly speed of 60 feet (poor). These boats are often equipped with small feet along the keel, allowing them to set down on dry land without tipping over. The price of this enhancement depends upon the size of the dragonbone boat.

Moderate transmutation; CL 9th; Craft Wondrous Item, *overland flight;* Price varies (see the following chart).

Boat Size	Enhancement Cost
Row Boat	+12,000 gp
Scully Boat	+30,000 gp
Knarr	+56,000 gp
Keel Boat	+90,000 gp

Dragoncraft Price: varies; *Dragon Parts:* dragon bones, dragon hide, dragon wings; *Skill:* Craft (shipmaking); *Weight:* same as ordinary boat of the same type.

Dragonclaw Gauntlet: A dragon's claws are sharp and deadly, but the damage done by a single claw is often negligible. However, enterprising dragoncrafters have found a way to use the entire foot as a weapon. Hollowed out and fitted with a special grip and straps, a dragonclaw gauntlet is an exotic one-handed melee weapon of a size equal to the dragon from which the foot was harvested. Such a weapon deals 1d4 points of slashing damage if from a Small dragon and 1d6 points of slashing damage if from a Medium dragon, and has a x2 critical multiplier. Harvesting a claw for this purpose requires 1 hour and a successful DC 15 Survival check. Druids are proficient with this weapon.

You can also use dragonclaw gauntlets to make trip attacks. If you are tripped during your own trip attempt, you can drop the dragonclaw gauntlet to avoid being tripped. While wearing a dragonclaw gauntlet, you receive a +2 circumstance bonus on Climb checks. Dragonclaw gauntlets are always masterwork weapons and the masterwork cost is included in the price.

Dragoncraft Price: 450 gp; *Dragon Part:* dragon claw; *Skill:* Craft (weaponsmith); *Weight:* 1 lb.

Dragonskull of Vigilance: A dragon's skull is used in the construction of a special helmet known as a dragonskull of vigilance. The skull must be from a dragon at least two sizes larger than the intended user. Anyone wearing a dragonskull of vigilance is immune to magical sleep and paralysis effects. Harvesting the skull requires 1 hour of work and a DC 15 Survival check.

Dragoncraft Price: 12,000 gp; *Dragon Part:* dragon skull; *Skill:* Craft (armorsmith); *Weight:* 3 lb.

Dragonsong Instruments: The vocal chords of dragons, if properly treated, aid in bardic music. This requires a full set to be removed and

DRAGONCRAFTER (GENERAL)

You can make special weapons, armor, and other items using parts of dragons as materials.

Prerequisite: Knowledge (arcane) 2 ranks.

Benefit: You can create any dragoncraft item whose prerequisites you meet. Creating a dragoncraft item follows the normal rules for the Craft skill (see page 70 of the *Player's Handbook*).

This feat originally appeared in the *Draconomicon*. See that book for more dragoncraft items.

used as part of a string instrument, such as a fiddle, harp, lute, or mandolin. The effect granted depends upon the size of the dragon and only applies to bardic music performed using a string instrument. An instrument can only gain one of the following traits.

Removing vocal cords for this purpose requires 1 hour of work and a DC 20 Survival check. If you fail the Craft (musical instrument) check by more than 5 you damage the material, forcing you to treat the dragon as one size category smaller for the purpose of what traits the vocal cords grant. If the dragon was size Small or smaller, the vocal cords are entirely ruined by a failed check.

Deeper Fascinate: A string instrument with this trait requires the vocal cords of a size Large or larger dragon. A bard playing a dragonsong instrument with this trait gains a +2 competence bonus on Perform checks made to use the *fascinate* ability.

Dragoncraft Price: cost of the masterwork instrument +600 gp; *Dragon Part:* dragon vocal cords (size Large or larger); *Skill:* Craft (musical instrument); *Weight:* as the instrument.

Extended Courage: Vocal cords of any size can be used to extend the inspire courage form of bardic music. This trait extends the amount of time the effect lasts to 8 rounds after the bard ceases playing.

Dragoncraft Price: cost of the masterwork instrument +400 gp; *Dragon Part:* dragon vocal cords (any size); *Skill:* Craft (musical instrument); *Weight:* as the instrument.

Greater Suggestion: Using the vocal cords of a size Huge or larger dragon, a dragonsong instrument with this trait makes its wielder seem more trustworthy. A bard using the *suggestion* or *mass suggestion* ability while playing a dragonsong instrument with this trait increases the DC to save against these abilities by +2.

Dragoncraft Price: cost of the masterwork instrument +2,600 gp; *Dragon Part:* dragon vocal cords (size Huge or larger); *Skill:* Craft (musical instrument); *Weight:* as the instrument.

Improved Countersong: The vocal cords of a size Medium or larger dragon can be used to craft a string instrument that increases the power of a bard's countersong bardic music ability. A bard playing a dragonsong instrument with this trait gains a +4 competence bonus on Perform checks made to use the countersong ability.

Dragoncraft Price: cost of the masterwork instrument +1,000 gp; *Dragon Part:* dragon vocal cords (size Medium or larger); *Skill:* Craft (musical instrument); *Weight:* as the instrument.

True Heroics: Using the vocal cords of a size Gargantuan or Colossal dragon, a dragonsong instrument with this trait can bring out the true heart of a hero in those who listen to its deep, resounding notes. A bard playing a dragonsong instrument with this trait while using the inspire heroics ability can affect one additional target and grant a +5 morale bonus on saving throws and a +5 dodge bonus to AC, instead of the usual +4.

Dragoncraft Price: cost of the masterwork instrument +18,000 gp; *Dragon Part:* dragon vocal cords (size Gargantuan or larger); *Weight:* as the instrument.

Eggshell Metal: When dragons hatch, they eat their eggshells. If present for the hatching, a character can easily recover most of the eggshell so long as he deals with the baby dragon. Harvesting dragon eggshell does not require a Survival check and only takes a full-round action to pick up the pieces. While an eggshell fragment is brittle (Hardness 1, 1 hp), it is immune to the same energy type the dragon is (fire, cold, sonic, electrical, or acid). Shells from a red dragon can be placed in the hottest fire and take no damage. As such, they make fine pots and bowls.

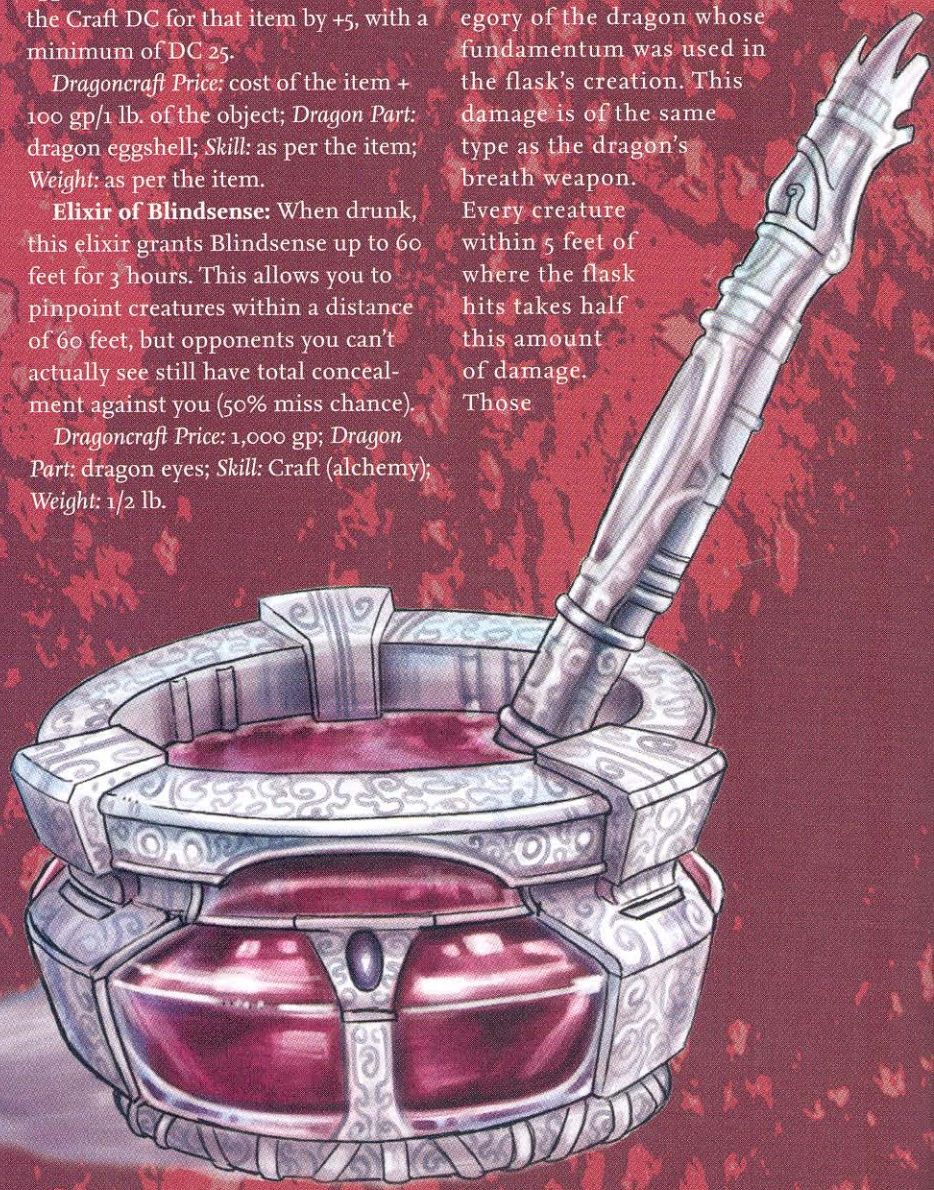
Crumbled dragon eggshells, when added to any metal during the forging process, grants the finished product energy resistance 5 against the appropriate element. This protection does not extend to the item's wielder, unless the item grants total cover. Only one type of eggshell can be mixed into a given metal item. Adding eggshell to a metal object increases the Craft DC for that item by +5, with a minimum of DC 25.

Dragoncraft Price: cost of the item + 100 gp/1 lb. of the object; *Dragon Part:* dragon eggshell; *Skill:* as per the item; *Weight:* as per the item.

Elixir of Blindsense: When drunk, this elixir grants Blindsense up to 60 feet for 3 hours. This allows you to pinpoint creatures within a distance of 60 feet, but opponents you can't actually see still have total concealment against you (50% miss chance).

Dragoncraft Price: 1,000 gp; *Dragon Part:* dragon eyes; *Skill:* Craft (alchemy); *Weight:* 1/2 lb.

Fundamentum Flask: Near the heart of all true dragons is a gland responsible for the beast's mighty breath weapon called the draconis fundamentum. Those skilled at dragoncraft can use this gland to create an explosive flask full of the wyrm's deadly breath. After alchemical treatment, the essence of the fundamentum is kept in a glass flask sealed with a metal stopper. You can throw a fundamentum flask as a splash weapon (see Thrown Splash Weapon on page 158 of the *Player's Handbook*). Treat this attack as a ranged touch attack with a range increment of 10 feet. A direct hit deals 1d6 points of damage per age category of the dragon whose fundamentum was used in the flask's creation. This damage is of the same type as the dragon's breath weapon. Every creature within 5 feet of where the flask hits takes half this amount of damage. Those



DRAGON POWER COMPONENTS

Spell	Dragon Part	XP Value	Market Price
Atonement (evil or neutral caster)	Heart of an old evil dragon	500	2,500 gp
Atonement (good or neutral caster)	Heart of an old good dragon	500	2,500 gp
Awaken	Tongue of an old green dragon	250	1,250 gp
Limited wish	Heart of a very old red dragon	300	1,500 gp
Permanency			
Gust of wind	Tongue of an adult white dragon	1,500	7,500 gp
Magic fang, greater	Fangs of a very old black dragon	1,500	7,500 gp
Prismatic sphere	Skull of a prismatic dragon[1]	4,500	22,500 gp
See invisible	Eyes of a mature adult dragon	1,000	5,000 gp
Vision	Brain of an adult dragon	100	500 gp
Wish	Heart of a wyrm gold dragon	5,000	25,000 gp

Magic Item	Dragon Part	XP Value	Market Price
Armor of acid resistance (any)	Egg shell of a black, copper, or green dragon	200[2]	1,000 gp
Armor of cold resistance (any)	Egg shell of a silver or white dragon	200[2]	1,000 gp
Armor of electricity resistance (any)	Egg shell of a blue or bronze dragon	200[2]	1,000 gp
Armor of fire resistance (any)	Egg shell of a brass, gold, or red dragon	200[2]	1,000 gp
Armor of invulnerability	Scales of a dragon with DR	600	3,000 gp
Banded mail of luck	Chest scales of an adult bronze dragon	756	3,780 gp
Intelligent magic items[3]	Brain of an adult dragon	400	2,000 gp
Elixir of fire breath	Tooth of a dragon with a fire breath weapon	44	220 gp
Flame tongue	Tongue of an adult red dragon	829	4,145 gp
Frost brand	Heart of an ancient white dragon	2,179	10,895 gp
Ring of djinni calling	Heart of a great wyrm brass dragon	5,000	25,000 gp
Ring of major energy resistance	Blood of an adult dragon	1,120	5,600 gp
Rod of rulership	Feet of a mature adult gold dragon	2,400	12,000 gp
Staff of earth and stone	Spine of a great wyrm copper dragon	3,220	16,100 gp
Staff of frost	Jaw bone of a wyrm white dragon	2,250	11,250 gp
Staff of power	Horn of an adult force dragon[1]	8,440	42,200 gp
Wand of bless	Horn of a juvenile gold dragon	30	150 gp
Wand of fireball	Horn of an old red dragon	450	2,250 gp
Wand of fog cloud	Horn of an adult bronze dragon	180	900 gp
Wand of hold person	Horn of an adult silver dragon	180	900 gp
Wand of ice storm	Horn of an ancient white dragon	840	4,200 gp
Wand of melf's acid arrow	Horn of an adult black dragon	180	900 gp
Wand of lightning bolt	Horn of an old blue dragon	450	2,250 gp
Wand of sleep	Horn of a juvenile brass dragon	30	150 gp
Wand of slow	Horn of an old copper dragon	450	2,250 gp
Wand of stinking cloud	Horn of an old green dragon	450	2,250 gp

1 This dragon appears in the *Epic Level Handbook*.
2 You may use more than one complete shell to offset the XP cost of this item, but all shells must come from the same kind of dragon.
3 The brain of an adult dragon can be used to offset the XP cost of the base price modifier and any powers shared by the dragon whose brain was used. Note that the item cannot possess any mental ability scores higher than that of the dragon whose brain was used and the alignment of the item always matches that of the dragon.

hit by this explosion receive a DC 16 Reflex save for half damage. Harvesting a fundamentum for this purpose requires 2 hours and a DC 25 Survival check. Failing this check by 5 or more results in the destruction of the fundamentum and exposes those attempting the check to the full force of the dragon's breath weapon as if the dragon were still alive (a save still applies to avoid half this damage or negate the effect).

Dragoncraft Price: 50 gp per age category of the dragon; *Dragon Part:* dragon fundamentum; *Skill:* Craft (alchemy); *Weight:* 1 lb.

Marrow Salve: Using the bone marrow of a young adult or older dragon, a skilled alchemist can create a single dose of salve that *removes disease* as per the spell of the same name. Unfortunately, this salve is also poisonous. As an ingested poison, the salve's initial damage is 1d3 Con and secondary is 1d3 Con. A DC 14 Fortitude save negates this damage.

Dragoncraft Price: 500 gp; *Dragon Part:* dragon bones; *Skill:* Craft (alchemy); *Weight:* 1/2 lb.

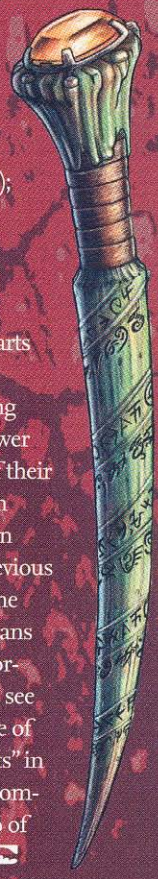
Wyrmblood Ink: Dragon blood can be prepared for use as ink. Often stored in crystalline inkwells, users of such rare ink also covet dragon leather parchments and specially etched dragon talon pens, claiming that the great sages of old only wrote with such tools.

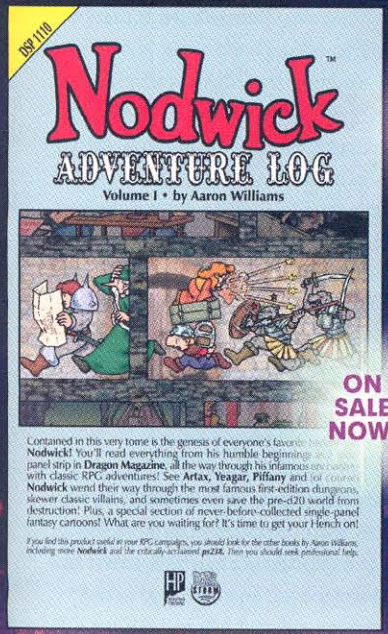
When using wyrmblood ink to scribe a scroll or add a spell to a spellbook, it takes half the normal amount of time to write. This does not affect the gp or XP cost needed to complete the work. One vial of this ink can be used on a total of nine levels worth of spells. One vial of wyrmblood ink can be created for each size category of the dragon above Small.

Dragoncraft Price: 100 gp; *Dragon Part:* dragon blood; *Skill:* Craft (alchemy); *Weight:* 1/2 lb.

POWER COMPONENTS

Power components are body parts used to reduce the XP cost of making magic items and casting certain spells. The inherent power dragons possess make many of their body parts suitable for just such a purpose. See the chart, Dragon Power Components, on the previous page for a complete listing of the most sought after draconic organs and appendages. For more information on power components, see the article "Eye of Newt and Toe of Frog, Using Power Components" in *Dragon* #317, and the power component rules variant on page 36 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.





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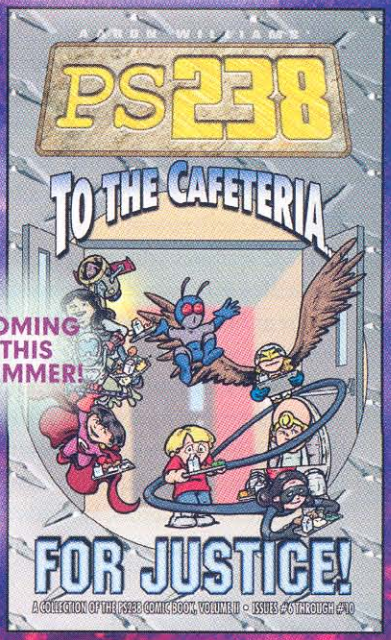

COMING THIS SUMMER!

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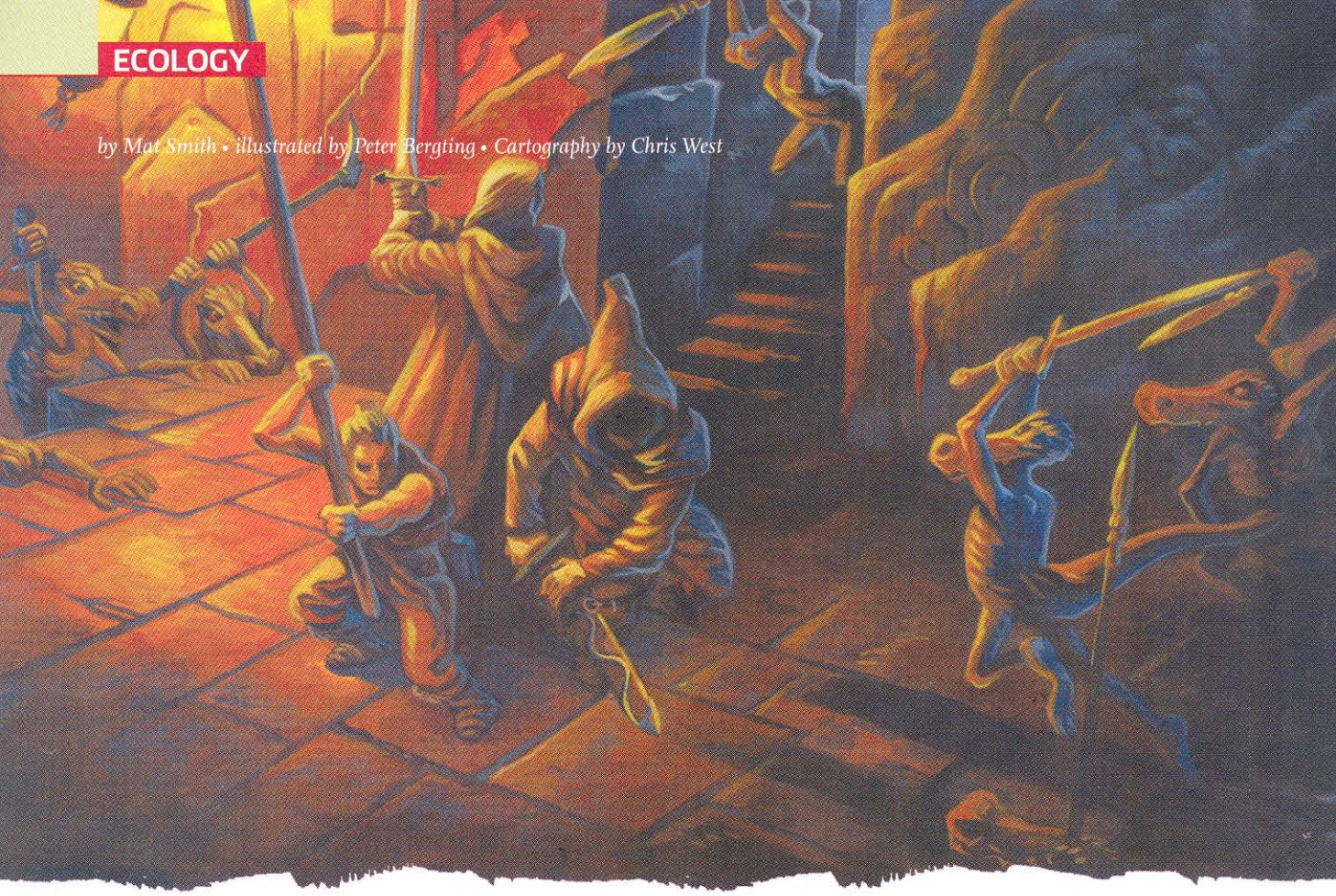


THE ECOLOGY OF THE KOBOLD

Never has a race of creatures been so perilously underestimated.

Countless adventurers' tales describe kobolds as cowardly weaklings easily dismissed by any who encounter them. If kobolds were truly such a pitiful race, however, they would have been exterminated ages ago. Those few survivors of an actual kobold attack tell of devious warriors emerging from the darkness—sometimes through the very walls—in relentless waves of sadistic ferocity and lethal ingenuity.

Brethren of dragons, kobolds are one of the most resourceful, industrious, and tenacious races to ever plumb the reaches of the Underdark. Hidden away beyond labyrinthine tunnels and countless traps, kobolds manage to do more than just survive in the deadliest realms known to explorers, they thrive.

HISTORY OF KOBOLDS

While not organized enough as a culture to have constructed a common history, kobolds do share a great deal of folklore and a number of heroic stories, most of which vary slightly from tribe to tribe. Not surprisingly, kobold culture lays claim to a few impressive creation myths, including one that traces back through the ages to the earliest times—back

to the cavernous lair of the goddess of evil dragons, Tiamat.

Shortly after the Queen of Dragons laid her first clutch of eggs, an army of thieves invaded her lair. Enraged by the intrusion, Tiamat sprung from her mountainous nest of gold and gemstones to crush the interlopers. Her merciless teeth and claws tore through scores of intruders while her terrible breath weapons destroyed hundreds at a time. The attackers hurled countless swords, spears, and arrows against the Chromatic Dragon. Most of the weapons shattered harmlessly against her formidable hide, but as the battle wore on, those few that hit their mark began to take their toll on the mighty goddess.

Amid the chaos of the frenzied attack, the swiftest of the bandits snatched up fistfuls of treasure and attempted to flee. The boldest of these struggled under the burden of even the smallest of Tiamat's magnificent eggs. Upon noticing the violation of her nest, Tiamat let forth a thunderous roar that brought down the ceiling of her lair and its connecting tunnels, crushing her attackers and trapping the escaping thieves.

Weakened by innumerable wounds, Tiamat crawled through the rubble of her lair and collapsed upon her nest. Needing time to recover from her injuries and unable to adequately protect her incubating brood, Tiamat used the last of her strength to cause the first of her precious eggs to hatch early. Punching his way out of his still-hardening shell with a stinger-tipped tail like that of his mother, Kurtulmak entered the world.

Infused with a fraction of Tiamat's divine power, Kurtulmak understood his situation and immediately set about clearing the fallen rock from his mother's lair. As he worked, he concocted a way to single-handedly defend the entire cavern from further intrusion. Collecting the weapons strewn about the lair, Kurtulmak constructed hundreds of devious traps to riddle the floor, walls, and ceiling of the vast chamber. Satisfied with the impenetrable perimeter of deadly mechanisms and pitfalls forming around her nest, Tiamat charged Kurtulmak with reopening the tunnels connecting her lair to the planes and then fell into a deep slumber.

In order to foil further intrusions, Kurtulmak began carving a twisting mazelike network of passages, unfathomable to any but himself. After cutting through miles and miles of rubble, earth, and stone, Kurtulmak eventually came across a niche filled with a small portion of his mother's stolen treasure. As he collected the gold and gems that had become fused in the living rock, intending to return them to Tiamat's lair, he also discovered one of her pilfered eggs. Knowing that the egg had been away from the nest for too long and deciding that his immense task would be easier with help, Kurtulmak caused the egg to hatch, creating miniature incarnations of himself. Thus the first of the kobold race was born.

Working alongside their creator, the kobolds quickly learned the art of mining through the earth and soon had discovered other caches of treasure and wayward eggs (which

KOBOLD KNOWLEDGE

The following table shows the result of a Knowledge (local) check as it relates to kobolds. Gnomes and those who dwell in or explore the Underdark (or the other dark places kobolds thrive) also might possess this information.

Knowledge (local) DC	Result
10	Kobolds are small, weak, cowardly reptilian humanoids who live underground.
15	Kobolds attack in overwhelming numbers using ambush tactics. They foster an intense hatred of gnomes and are highly sensitive to bright light.
20	Kobolds protect their lairs and their narrow connecting tunnels with deadly traps. They often employ poisons (favoring Strength-draining toxins) and guardian creatures, particularly when fighting larger enemies.
25	A kobold tribe usually hoards its treasure deep inside a temple dedicated to its god, Kurtulmak. Filled with the deadliest traps imaginable, these temples are usually rigged to collapse.

Kurtulmak also caused to hatch, further proliferating the kobold race.) Kurtulmak also showed his people how to construct wily traps and various defenses in order to secure the newly carved tunnels. As creatures began to discover and explore the passageways, Kurtulmak taught the kobolds the art of ambushing enemies and the wisdom of entering battle only with the advantage of superior numbers.

As the kobolds grew in number, they continued digging an ever-expanding network of tunnels, eventually reaching every corner of the Material Plane, where they established lairs of their own and began to flourish.

PHYSIOLOGY OF KOBOLDS

Standing just over 2 feet tall and weighing around 40 pounds, average kobolds are physically weak but fast and agile. Their thin and wiry frames make kobolds well suited to moving quickly and fighting within the cramped tunnels of their lairs.

After hatching from its egg, a kobold grows quickly, reaching maturity around the age of six. While the lifespan of an average kobold might be shortened by violence, accident, or disease (in that order), particularly wise and wily kobolds can live up to an astonishing 120 to 140 years (owing to their draconic heritage).

Kobold skulls are often described as being doglike due to their long snouts and sharp teeth. However, many of the characteristics of a kobold's head are more accurately defined as displaying rudimentary features of dragonkind: forward-facing nostrils, ear holes, a forked tongue, and two short, keratinous horns sprouting from the top of the skull.

Kobolds' remarkably sensitive, glowing red eyes allow them to pick out the smallest details from their surroundings, even in pitch-black caverns. However, intense light (such as bright sunlight or that created by a *daylight* spell) is difficult for kobolds to tolerate and causes discomfort and disorientation (resulting in the dazzled condition). Kobolds also rely on their acute sense of hearing to detect approaching danger and to pick out familiar sounds that help them navigate the confusing maze of tunnels surrounding their tribe's lair.

Ranging in color from dark, rusty brown to reddish black, the toothy scales that cover kobolds' tough hides are similar to those of an iguana or other large lizard. The scales that cover kobolds' short tails are very fine and slightly lighter than the rest of their mottled hides, giving them a smooth, "naked" appearance. While primarily used for balance, kobolds often use their highly flexible yet nonprehensile tails to wield specialized weapons (see the tail blade and tail club in *Savage Species*).

Kobolds can eat just about anything—plants, animals, and even intelligent humanoids (cannibalistic kobold tribes are common). Despite an omnivorous diet, kobolds do not possess differentiated teeth—they are all short and pointed. Interestingly, a kobold loses and grows new teeth throughout its entire life, taking anywhere from two to three years to completely replace an entire set of fifty-four. Kobolds often save their teeth, strung on necklaces or other adornments, as an impressive demonstration of their age.

PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIETY OF KOBOLDS

As a relatively small and physically weak race, kobold society revolves around survival. Virtually every aspect of all kobolds' activities contribute toward the tribe's survival in one way or another. As such, all kobolds serve their tribes by filling at least one of several predictable roles.

Kobold trapmakers not only create deadly devices that guard against intruders, they also design contraptions to catch or kill animals for food. Farmers cultivate mushrooms and edible plants as well as carnivorous, poisonous, or dangerous vegetation that serve as barriers or deterrents against invasion. Miners extract precious metals, minerals, and gemstones from the earth while carving the intricate tunnels and chambers that form the tribe's lair, its outlying defense, and mazelike escape passages. Animal handlers capture, raise, and train the tribe's guardian creatures while also tending small herds of lizards, centipedes, or other domesticated animals and vermin.

The warriors of a kobold tribe, of course, play the most proactive roles in the tribe's collective effort to survive. Kobold warriors constantly remain active and alert—verging on paranoia. The need for constant watchfulness is such that a warrior caught sleeping or distracted while on duty faces a death sentence.

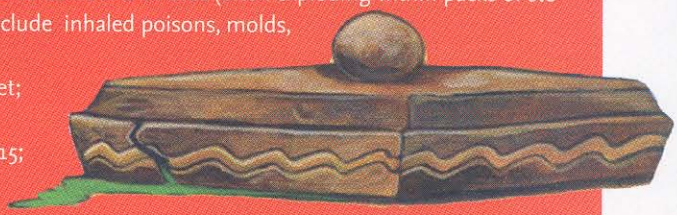
KOBOLD TRAPS

For miles around and throughout every kobold lair are set a dizzying number of traps. Kobolds make use of materials from their surroundings and use weapons and armor from fallen enemies. They fill clay pots with vermin, oozes, and other deadly substances. They lace corpses with vermin eggs, ready to burst into swarms, and cultivate deadly plants, mold, and fungi. They dig pits lined with disease-ridden spikes or containing deadly creatures. Kobold trapmakers are renowned for their enviable skills but feared for their innovation—they're always devising something new.

Ceramic Mines

Commonly fashioned as shallow ceramic bowls, ceramic mines are filled with any of a variety of alchemically prepared substances and then sealed. The creation process, which involves firing the ceramic vessel in a kiln, creates a fragile vessel filled with a pressurized gas or liquid that explodes outward when the mine is broken (Hardness 2, 2 hp).

Usually buried in a passageway so that a passing creature treads upon them, some ceramic mines are concealed in walls or ceilings to be targeted with a crossbow bolt or sling stone during a fight. Others are fashioned to appear like rock formations (usually stalactites or stalagmites) or even decorative sculptures. Sculpted ceramic mines are commonly placed where they can be dropped on opponents or hidden among kobold treasure hordes to confound thieves (often exploding within packs of stolen loot). Substances often used in the creation of ceramic mines include inhaled poisons, molds, oozes, slimes, vermin eggs, or other alchemical substances.



Ceramic Mine (Basic): CR 1; mechanical; touch trigger; no reset; DC 11 Reflex save half damage; 2d6 points of acid, cold, or fire energy damage; single target; Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 15; Market Price: 600 gp.

Ceramic Mine (Green Slime-filled Stalactite): CR 5; mechanical; location trigger; no reset; Atk +15 (2d6, stalactite; see note); single target; Search DC 15; Disable Device DC 15; Note: When targeted square is entered, this stalactite drops from the ceiling, possibly striking the character. Upon impact, the stalactite shatters, covering everything within the target square with a veneer of green slime (see page 76 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for effects); Market Price: 2,500 gp.

Kobold executions usually take the nerve-wracking form of forcing the condemned to test the effectiveness of newly created traps. The execution continues until either the condemned kobold is killed or he has sprung or avoided three traps. At that point, the kobold emerges either as a corpse or an exonerated hero worthy of praise and respect from the tribe.

While survival of the tribe is paramount, for an individual kobold self-preservation remains top-of-mind. Because of this "better you than me" mentality, patrols and warbands actively recruit even the weakest, most incompetent, and dull-witted kobolds. That way, when encountering a superior enemy, the clever, swift, and strong kobolds can safely retreat while encouraging their less-apt companions to "hold them off while reinforcements move up." (This explains why the caricature of the bumbling kobold remains so prevalent—those are the ones most adventurers actually see.)

As Kurtulmak teaches, fleeing from certain, probable, possible, or perceived danger is acceptable, intelligent behavior. Most kobolds quickly come to the realization that "I don't have to outrun a dire bear, I just have to outrun another kobold." Particularly clever kobolds discover that tripping or incapacitating another kobold often makes it even easier to get away. Survivors of these when-push-comes-to-shove situations become envied by their more fleet-footed peers for their ingenuity and superior escape tactics.

The only exception to this cowardly trend arises when a kobold warband encounters a group of gnomes. All kobolds share a vitriolic hatred of gnomes and (unless outnumbered) ferociously ambush them on sight, fleeing only if the tide of battle turns tragically against them.

TRIBAL STRUCTURE

Most kobold tribes form caste-based gerontocracies—where the oldest individual kobold leads the others. Often, this leader is a powerful sorcerer, but occasionally a highly skilled warrior or another particularly talented kobold outlives his contemporaries to assume the leadership of a tribe. Change in leadership usually happens when a leader dies, although some are usurped when the tribe determines that the mere fact that he continues to draw breath no longer warrants his position of power.

Tribal laws come and go as each leader of a tribe changes rules to suit his personal ideas and vision. Regardless, a constabulary force enforces even the newest laws as if they had always existed, often causing problems for kobolds away from the tribe during a change in leadership. Devious kobolds who come to power occasionally institute laws that enable them to eliminate rivals or make other personal gains.

Clerics of Kurtulmak (known as Eyes of Kurtulmak) rarely live long enough to become chieftains. However, they

do possess a great deal of power and influence within the tribe, as their place rests at the center of every important endeavor. The installation of traps and construction of other tribal defenses are always blessed by a cleric of Kurtulmak. Additionally, they oversee a tribe's tunneling and mining efforts, directing new excavations toward "divinely inspired" goals, such as one of the fabled Lost Eggs of Tiamat. Whether exploring new areas, facilitating a trade of commodities, or probing for weaknesses in nearby gnome or dwarf settlements, an Eye of Kurtulmak leads all expeditions. Every warband, hunting party, and raiding party includes at least one cleric, whose presence and prayers draw the favor of their deity down upon them.

While worship of Kurtulmak is prevalent in kobold societies, organized religious services are virtually nonexistent. However, all kobolds utter small prayers and makes observations to their deity regularly throughout the day. This is largely because Kurtulmak takes a very active interest in his people, to the point that he regularly sends an aspect of himself to assist in particularly important raids, battles, or other crucial undertakings.

A kobold tribe's activity continues around the clock, with each kobold's work, rest, and recreation time broken into shifts based on the amount of time it takes a patrol to make one or more tours of the tribe's longest patrol route. (Kobolds keep track of time in "watches," rather than "hours," making each tribe's unit of measure different.) This perpetual activity keeps a tribe extremely vigilant.

As a caste-based society, certain occupations afford greater privileges. Each caste, in turn, forms a sort of pecking order that determines leadership and differentiates a master from an apprentice. (Positions in this chain of command shift with regularity, as talented and determined kobolds supplant those above them.) Gender has no bearing on the structure of kobold society—roles and responsibilities fall upon the most suitable or convenient individual.

The most coveted and privileged roles for a tribe member are trapmaker, sorcerer, caretaker, and warrior. Clerics, farmers, and miners make up the bulk of the tribe's second-class. Animal handlers, craftsfolk, and those with other abilities usually fill the lowest rank in a kobold tribe, as their contribution to the welfare of the tribe doesn't immediately impact its survival.

NEST TO PYRE: GROWING UP KOBOLD

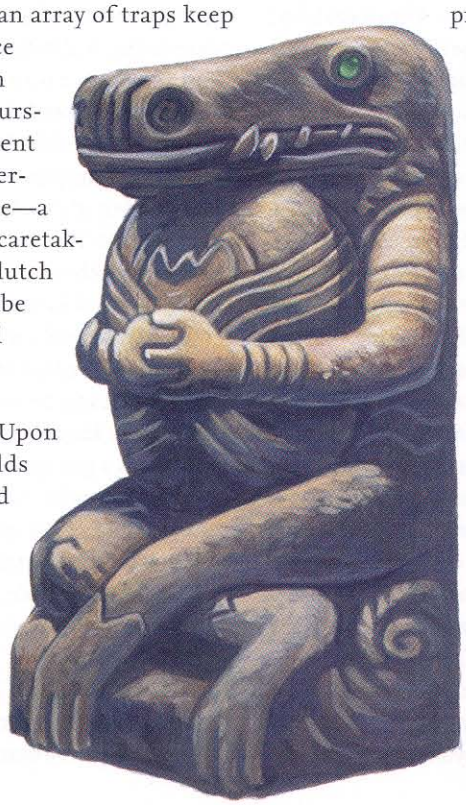
Kobolds rarely mate for life. Typically, a romantic bond between an adult male and female lasts no more than a few months, often culminating in the female laying a single egg. Kobolds of both genders remain fertile throughout their adult lives, with females capable of laying around a half dozen eggs over the course of a year.

Kobolds are partially ovoviviparous—the embryonic kobold develops inside its egg for two months before its mother lays the egg and another two months before hatching. Once laid, each egg is carefully collected in a central nursery where caretakers and an array of traps keep them safe. (Once an egg has been moved to the nursery, neither parent takes much interest in its welfare—a task left to the caretakers.) A typical clutch of eggs for a tribe of two hundred kobolds ranges anywhere from twenty to fifty. Upon hatching, kobolds are fully formed and somewhat self-sufficient (able to derive nutrition from just about anything they can chew), but aren't strong enough to fend for themselves against predators.

During the first six months of life, hatchlings form powerful emotional bonds with their clutch mates—other kobolds who hatch within a month of one another. The intense rivalries and friendships developed between clutch mates are the strongest in kobold culture.

Hatchlings quickly develop motor skills and a rudimentary understanding of the Draconic language. Also among the first things taught to hatchlings are fundamental survival skills—ranging from rock throwing and digging holes to running away and hiding. Kobolds' natural talents for trapmaking are also fostered at an early age. Kobolds learn to use simple weapons, such as slings and spears, as soon as they're coordinated enough to survive the learning process. Caretakers note each hatchling's particular skills and aptitudes (or lack thereof), watching for that first spark of sorcery, gift for trapmaking, skill with a weapon, or any other trait that could pigeonhole where a kobold might fit into the tribe.

By age two, a kobold may petition to leave the nursery by enduring a private ceremony known as the Blessing of the Pit. Presided over by a caretaker and an Eye of Kurtulmak, the simple ritual requires the kobold to cross a 10-foot-wide pit constructed with a variety of hazards. Pit dimensions and contents vary from ritual to ritual as determined by the presiding priest. How the young kobold leaps over, climbs around, drops



LAIR of the BLACKTONGUE TRIBE
3a
C
3b
6
2
1
C
6
8
4
5b
C
4
5a
4
7
6
1. Main Cavern & Living Quarters
2. Temple of Kurtulmak
3a. Nursery
3b. Hatchery
4. Mushroom, Lichen, and Moss Farms
5a. Giant Cave Cricket Corral
5b. Giant Centipede Corral
6. Food & Supply Storage
7. Secondary Cavern & Living Quarters
8. Craftsfolk Workspace
Trapped Areas
Concealed Doors
C
Vertical Passages
Rubble
1 square = 10 feet
WEST

down to navigate through, or otherwise circumvents the danger is irrelevant—the end result being what's important. By successfully reaching the far side, a clever or capable kobold earns the Blessing of the Pit and the right to join the rest of the tribe as a juvenile. Failure to cross the pit invariably results in the unremarkable death of a particularly clumsy or dull-witted kobold.

The Eye of Kurtulmak who presides over the ceremony assigns the young kobold her first role in the tribe. The assignment usually follows the suggestions of the nursery's caretakers, but might differ depending on the presiding cleric's whim or the immediate need of the tribe. (If an entire warband has recently been slaughtered, the nursery produces a surprising number of new warriors.)

Non-warriors aggressively seek out apprenticeships in accordance with their assigned roles, trying to impress would-be mentors with demonstrations of talent or capacity for a chosen vocation. An apprenticeship might last anywhere from six months to several years, terminating when the student demonstrates a higher degree of skill than the master (at which point, their roles are reversed).

A significant number of kobolds (often those without any noteworthy talents or ambitions) become miners. Fortunately, few races possess a greater inborn proclivity for mining than kobolds. The unrivaled industry and skill of a kobold workforce produces a remarkable amount of gold, iron, coal, and other valued substances in a stunningly short time. Governments and crafts guilds often secretly employ kobolds for just this reason.

Kobolds most commonly mine in one of two ways, as dictated by threats within those regions and the ambitions of their leader. Some skittish kobold miners venture far from their lairs, yet avoid lingering around large deposits of precious metals and gemstones for very long, as too many other races seek such treasures. When encountered, these miners usually extract a few cartloads of these valuable substances and then hurry back to their lair. Alternatively, more ambitious kobold tribes covetously guard precious deposits and mine them until depleted. Rather than hoarding such wealth, such tribes usually turn their treasures toward currying the favor of more powerful allies, like derro, troglodytes, and deep-dwelling dragons.

Working in tandem with miners, tunneling crews are charged with exploration and crafting defensive mazes around a tribe's lair. They often employ trained or magically controlled burrowing creatures, such as dire badgers or thoqquas, to speed their efforts.

Budding warriors are assigned to the tribe's constabulary, the least-respected role in the warrior caste, where they gain additional training with weapons and simple tactics. By the time a kobold outgrows her first set of teeth, she is considered old enough to join a patrol. (Some kobolds, eager to see action before their third year, attempt to collect or claim other kobolds' teeth as their own.) In order to join, a kobold must prove herself worthy by defeating and taking the place of a superior. Such challenges rarely prove fatal, but the grudges they often produce frequently end in *accidents* in the field.

By the onset of adulthood, a kobold usually settles upon a vocation, although this role commonly changes several times over the years depending on the fluctuating needs of the tribe. At this point, a kobold focuses on honing her skills in order to increase her standing in her caste and value to the tribe. Age and ability are the two most attractive qualities a kobold can possess, warranting larger shares of food, safer sleeping arrangements, better weapons and

gear, and increased interest from the opposite gender. An adult kobold's life consists of perpetual jockeying to gain more of all of these.

Kobolds usually meet their end in combat, during a cave-in, or in a messy accident involving a newly installed trap. In order to avoid attracting scavengers, and not wanting to waste perfectly good meat, the remains of a slain kobold are usually cooked and eaten. Hunting parties use the bodies of kobolds who died of disease or poison as bait. Tribal heroes and those few kobolds who live long enough to die of old age receive the honor of being burned on a funeral pyre (after they've been stripped of particularly valuable items and gear).

KOBOLD LAIRS

Kobolds have been encountered in just about every location that is suitably dark and restricts the movement of Medium or larger creatures, such as heavily overgrown forests, jungles, and swamps. However, most kobold lairs are located underground, formed by series of interconnected caves surrounded by a snarl of trap-laden tunnels and shafts that might span several miles. Innumerable intersections, unexplained dead-ends, and concealed passages make navigating the labyrinthine network all but impossible for any outsider. While even the largest tunnels usually hamper the movement of anything much bigger than a kobold, some narrow to a point so that even

THE ORIGIN OF KURTULMAK'S RIVALRY WITH GARL GLITTERGOLD

From a young age all kobolds learn to hate gnomes and crave to confound all their efforts. This rivalry amounts to far more than ingrained racial hatred, however. Rather—as kobold priests often relate—there is a very specific reason for this centuries-long blood feud, which traces back to their very gods.

The Kobold Myth

Long ago, Kurtulmak set about carving an immense cavern, the grandeur of which soon rivaled the audience chambers of any of the other deities. Kurtulmak intended to use the magnificent grotto as the setting for the greatest prank ever played—he planned to invite all the other deities to dinner, and as entertainment he would tell the tale of "The Violation of Tiamat's Lair," ending when he dropped the cavern on their heads.

As a miner without equal, Kurtulmak skillfully cut from the roof and walls ponderously large slabs of rock and held them in place with a complex, interconnected series of cunningly wrought and artfully concealed beams. The entire devious construction, which ranged over the whole cavern, would collapse in rapid succession after the removal of a single golden keystone.

One day, while looking for shiny gemstones, Garl Glittergold passed near Kurtulmak's cavern and heard the toil within. Ever curious about Kurtulmak's activities, Garl crept nearer in order to spy upon the kobold god, as he so often did. As he caught sight of the grand cavern, the gnome god stopped to observe Kurtulmak's breathtaking endeavor.

While puzzling over the intricately crafted stonework, Garl's eye was caught by the twinkle of a small, gold-colored stone wedged tightly into a nearby wall. Greedily, he tugged and tugged on the sparkly stone, but it wouldn't come loose. Frustrated, Garl gave up his struggle in order to further marvel at the work that sprawled overhead. Slowly, the nature of Kurtulmak's construction dawned upon the gnome god who then guessed at the keystone's purpose, becoming awed by Kurtulmak's incredible skill.

Stricken with jealousy, Garl became intent on destroying Kurtulmak's brilliant creation before anyone else witnessed its subtle majesty. He seized the keystone once more, twisting and turning it every possible way until he finally wrested it free from its socket. As Garl dropped the golden prize in his pocket, a sudden rumbling noise filled the enormous cave. Frightened, he fled down a nearby passage and hid from the catastrophic cave-in that followed. As a souvenir of his harrowing experience, Garl pierced the stone and hung it on a chain around his neck, adopting it as his own holy symbol.

Kurtulmak, furious at the cavern's impossibly premature collapse, quickly dug his way out from under countless tons of stone. Soon afterward, the kobold deity discovered the culprit responsible for the calamitous event when he noticed Garl wearing his keystone like a trophy around his neck. Kurtulmak confronted the gnome god, who nervously chuckled, dismissed his disastrous act as an

Small creatures must squeeze in order to pass.

At least one section of virtually every kobold tunnel is rigged to collapse, enabling a tribe to quickly and easily seal off a passage in the event of an invasion or other imminent danger. To prevent accidents, these areas are usually constructed with two or three fail-safes (requiring the removal of multiple bypasses before triggering the cave in), although some function as particularly deadly traps.

The actual inhabited area of a tribe's territory consists of an anthill-like combination of natural and kobold-made chambers often adorned with simple carvings, murals, and totemlike trophies. Aside from these rudimentary decorations, most kobold lairs are fairly Spartan, as individual kobolds keep all of their personal possessions with them at all times. Usually shared by several kobolds at a time, in shifts as each day progresses, living and sleeping quarters take the form of ledges, nooks, and small caves fashioned to conceal their occupants from casual observers (Spot DC 14). Kobold lairs are very clean and sanitary; waste is disposed of by dumping it down a deep shaft or by feeding it to a captive creature that subsists on refuse, such as an otyugh or gelatinous cube.

Every kobold community contains a temple or shrine to Kurtulmak carved from solid rock and accessed through twisting, trap-filled tunnels. The skulls

episode he'd long forgotten, and hastily excused himself.

His legendary stunt spoiled, Kurtulmak vowed to exact a slow and terrible revenge upon the gnome god. Kurtulmak's intense hatred for Garl Glittergold sparked a feud between the two that spread across the planes, touching the races created by each of the deities, which explains why kobolds and gnomes hate one another.

Gnomish Revisions

While the basic points of the story of how Garl Glittergold collapsed Kurtulmak's cavern remain irrefutable, most gnomes point out a few misconceptions about Garl's intent and involvement with the kobold god's schemes.

Never having taken any real interest in Kurtulmak, Garl found himself at the entrance to the kobold god's cavern only because of the tremendous racket echoing from within. Having followed the cacophony of hammer, pick, and chisel, Garl became somewhat curious about the work going on inside. Renowned for his masterful execution of countless practical jokes, The Joker quickly surmised what Kurtulmak was up to. When the twinkling keystone caught his eye, Garl smiled as he instantly understood its function and decided to put Kurtulmak's work to the ultimate test—just to see if it would work. The gnome deity was pleasantly surprised when the entire cavern actually did collapse, toppling Kurtulmak from his ladder and burying him under enormous slabs of stone. The gnome god decided to keep the nugget-shaped keystone both since it so closely resembled his long-held holy symbol and as a souvenir of his quickly forgotten little joke.

As Garl has greater cosmic concerns and distractions, the conflict between he and Kurtulmak continues, for the most part, to be a one-sided battle. However, as kobolds developed a deity-fueled hatred for gnomes, they came to pose a very real danger to his people. Because of this, Garl keeps a casual eye on his self-proclaimed "archenemy" and warns his followers to never underestimate the threat posed by Kurtulmak's vicious spawn.

of all the gnomes slain by the tribe festoon the interior of the temple. Deep within the structure, the accumulated wealth of the tribe lies secured within a heavily trapped vault. (Reliable sources report that kobold temples are always constructed in such a way that they collapse when triggered purposefully by attendant clergy or accidentally by unwitting thieves.) Few kobolds, aside from the clerics who know the secrets to the temple's many traps, actually ever set foot inside the temple. Instead, kobolds offer prayers at its entrance with the belief that Kurtulmak hears them.

While the temple to Kurtulmak is a lair's dominant edifice, the most important structure to a kobold tribe is its well-concealed and trapped nursery, with hatchlings raised in a secured cavern and eggs locked away in a well-protected hatchery. Safe passage into and through the nursery requires admittance and guidance by one of its caretakers.

Other structures commonly found within a kobold tribe's lair include a small forge, an oven or kiln, a well or cistern, and a chamber that serves as a storage locker for food gathered by the tribe's farmers, foragers, and hunters. Large caverns nearby are often reserved for cultivating foodstuffs and raising livestock. Located throughout a kobold lair, particularly at every entrance and major intersection, signal devices such as gongs, drums, or horns contribute to the tribe's collective vigilance.

The layout of a kobold tribe's lair is extremely fluid—workers regularly collapse or seal off tunnels and caves as they carve new ones. This makes any information about the layout or location of areas inhabited by kobolds progressively less reliable over time. In fact, a kobold lair actually migrates slowly through the Underdark as its miners and priests cautiously search for a defensible, safe area in which to establish a more permanent kobold settlement.

VS. KOBOLDS

Because of their physical weaknesses, kobolds rely on a combination of ambush tactics, ranged attacks, traps, and overwhelming numbers to defeat their enemies. Never underestimate the viciousness of a kobold force and always remember the veteran explorers adage: "For every kobold you see, there's a dozen more hiding in the walls."

Watch for Traps: Walk slowly and carry a 10-foot pole. Kobolds protect their lairs and a vast area surrounding them (reaching miles in all directions) with all manner of traps. Use caution when moving through kobold territory, making liberal use of Listen, Search, and Spot checks along with tracking and stone cunning abilities if available. The Disable Device skill also proves invaluable. Keep in mind that by the time a party actually sees a kobold, they've probably already stumbled deep inside a tribe's trap-laden province.

Be Suspicious: A kobold holding its ground is probably bait, daring an attacker into moving within range of an undetected trap or other threat (such as a roper or darkmantle). Taking the time to make a Sense Motive check on any enemy is never a bad idea.

Beware Divine and Arcane Magic: Fear the wrath of Kurtulmak and the blood of Tiamat, as a kobold warband always counts a cleric and often at least one sorcerer among its number. Commonly used spells include those that bolster the effectiveness of a warband's members, such as *bear's endurance, bless, cat's grace,* and *haste,* as well as spells that add to the warband's numbers and strength, such as monster summoning and *planar ally* spells. Spells such as *confusion* and *suggestion* are also often used to reduce the effectiveness of an enemy force.

Light 'Em Up: Kobolds prefer to fight in darkness, where they retain an advantage over light-dependent enemies. Extinguishing light sources is among the first actions taken during a kobold ambush. Like many underground-dwelling creatures, kobolds become dazzled in bright sunlight. Well-prepared explorers of any subterranean realm should possess at least one *daylight* spell, although scrolls and wands of this spell might prove even more valuable.

Fire Bad: Kobolds always try to use a party's already-lit torches and lanterns to ignite combustibles—such as oil, flammable gas, or other alchemical substances. Using magic light sources, such as magic weapons or sunrods, avoids inadvertently contributing to the kobold war machine.

Poison: Kobolds often employ poison on their weapons and traps, favoring Strength-sapping toxins harvested from domesticated vermin (most commonly Medium spiders and Large scorpions).

Don't Start a Fight You Can't Finish: Encounters with kobolds are often cut short as they flee into the darkness. Their hit-and-run style of fighting usually lead adventurers to mistakenly claim victory. As Kurtulmak teaches, no fight is truly over if even one kobold survives. Surviving kobolds regroup, gather reinforcements, and patiently tail a party with the intention of springing another ambush. This follow-up attack likely occurs after the party has been weakened by another threat, is incapacitated or distracted in some way (such as by climbing a wall), or has settled down to camp.

MINIATURE MULTITUDES

Along with D&D staples and fan favorites like orcs, goblins, and drow, *Dungeons & Dragons Miniatures* provides a host of miniature kobolds, each meticulously crafted to 32mm scale. Starting with the Kobold Warrior in the *Harbinger* set, kobold reinforcements have since appeared in *Dragoneye* (with the Kobold Skirmisher) and *Aberrations* (featuring the Kobold Champion and the Kobold Sorcerer). This trend continues next month with the release of *Angelfire* and the new Kobold Soldier.

Kobold Champion *Kobold Sorcerer* *Kobold Soldier*

by Greg Marks • illustrated by David Wahlstrom

IN DEFENSE OF HOME AND HOARD

Most adventuring parties daydream about the treasure they might claim amid the piles of gold coins and jeweled statues of a vanquished dragon's hoard. However, just because adventurers might find some magic items in a dragon's hoard useful doesn't mean the treasure trove might not also contain a few items designed specifically with a dragon in mind. To protect their lairs, wise dragons create a host of powerful items that might not only act as prizes to be won, but also as tools to use against treasure-hunting thieves!

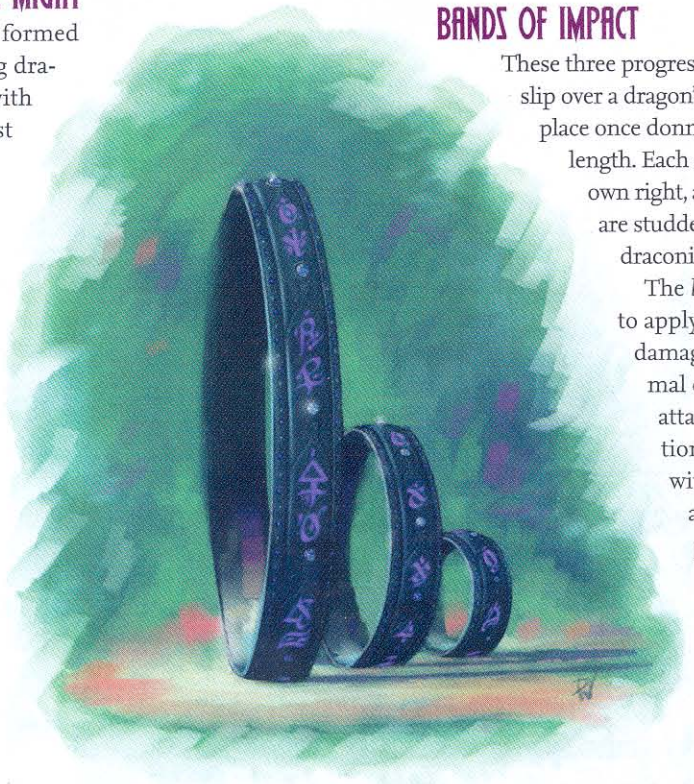
AMULET OF FEARSOME MIGHT

This bronze necklace is formed in the shape of a roaring draconic head embedded with sparkling ruby eyes. First created by the brass dragon Usszontocak to avoid combat, none know of the amulet's fate, nor whether its power was ever duplicated.

When worn, the *amulet of fearsome might* doubles the radius of the wearer's innate frightful presence (to a 60-foot radius per age category in the case of dragons) and increases the DC to save against it by +2. If the wearer does not have a frightful presence, the amulet does not bestow any such ability.

In addition, any spells or spell-like abilities with the fear descriptor cast by the wearer have their DCs increased by +2. This bonus does not stack with that from the feats Spell Focus or Greater Spell Focus. This ability functions whether or not the wearer has an innate frightful presence.

Moderate necromancy; CL 7th; Craft Wondrous Item, crafter must possess the frightful presence special ability, *fear*; Price 11,100 gp; Weight 1 lb.



BANDS OF IMPACT

These three progressively larger adamantine bands slip over a dragon's tail and are magically held in place once donned, spread equidistant up its length. Each a stunning piece of jewelry in its own right, all three of the adamantine bands are studded with gems and inscribed with draconic runes of strength.

The *bands of impact* allow the wearer to apply double his Strength bonus on damage rolls—instead of the normal one-and-a-half times—when attacking with a tail slap. In addition, an attack with a tail equipped with *bands of impact* is considered adamantine and magic for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction. While made for dragons, any creature with a tail slap attack can take

advantage of the *bands of impact,* which resize to fit the wearer.

Moderate evocation; CL 11th; Craft Wondrous Item, *bull's Strength;* Price 11,100 gp; Weight 18 lb.

CAT'S PAWS

This intricately engraved pair of thin gold bracers depicts a cat catching two mice with one paw. Any creature with at least two forelimbs can wear the *cat's paws.*

Dragons wearing these bracers are treated as one size category larger for the purposes of using their crush special attack. For example, a Large dragon wearing *cat's paws* could crush as if it were a Huge dragon (giving it the ability to crush Small creatures). A Colossal dragon (which cannot grow any larger) wearing these bracers deals 6d8 points of damage on a successful crush attack and can crush any creature of size Huge or smaller.

Moderate transmutation; CL 8th; Craft Wondrous Item, *bull's Strength;* Price 10,000 gp; Weight 1 lb.

DRAGONSLAYER CLAWS

Perhaps the most dangerous foe a dragon can face is another dragon. Dragons designed these magic claws to help them fight off attempts by their own draconic brethren to claim their hoards. Alternatively, some dragons use these claws to claim the hoards of those they view as weak.

These dark metal blades are designed to fit over a dragon's claws on one limb. A dragon wearing *dragonslayer claws* cannot also make use of a glove on that claw. When worn, *dragonslayer claws* deal additional damage equal to half the wearer's Hit Dice on claw attacks made with the claw on which the item is worn. The bonus damage only applies to a single claw attack per round—usually the first claw attack made—no matter how many claw attacks the wearer can make. The dragon must declare to which attack the extra damage is applied before the attack roll is made.

Any creature of size Large or larger with a claw attack may wear these claws. However, the *dragonslayer claws* bestow two negative levels when worn by any creature not of the dragon type. The negative levels remain as long as the claws are worn and disappear when the creature removes the *dragonslayer claws.* These negative levels never result in actual level loss, but they cannot be overcome in any way (including *restoration* or *wish*) while the *dragonslayer claws* are worn.

Moderate transmutation; CL 8th; Craft Wondrous Item, creator must be of the dragon type, *magic weapon;* Price 18,000 gp; Weight 10 lb.

ELIXIR OF BLINDSIGHT

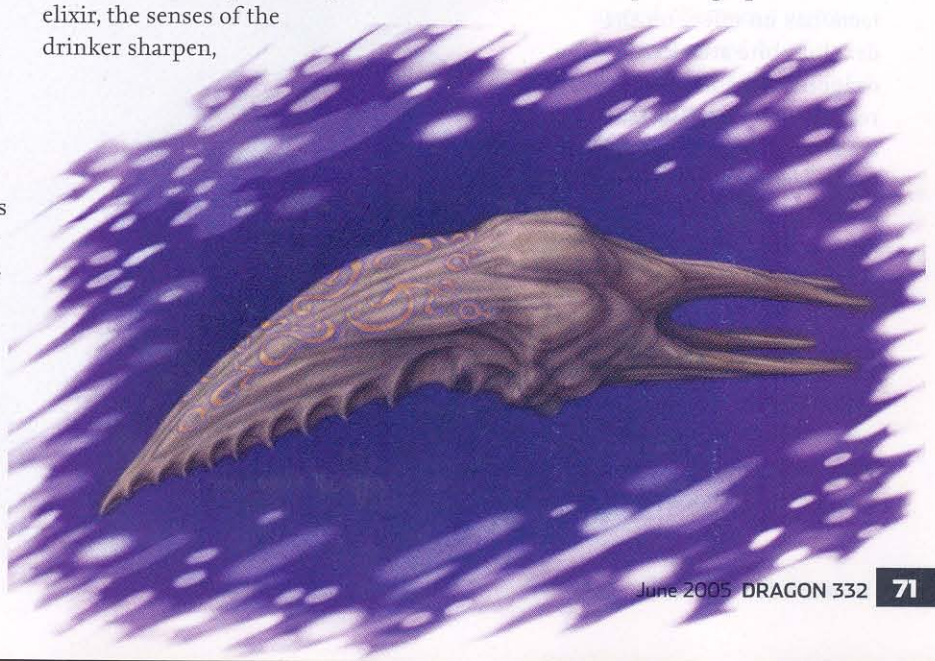
Dragons plagued by especially talented hunters treasure this elixir. The blindsense of dragons is not as precise as the blindsight possessed by some other creatures. By imbibing this elixir, the senses of the drinker sharpen, increasing any inherent blindsense to blindsight for 1 hour. If the drinker does not possess blindsense, he gains no benefit from consuming the elixir. Likewise, those who already possess blindsight gain no benefit from the *elixir of blindsight.*

Faint divination; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, *clairaudience/clairvoyance;* Price 750 gp; Weight —.

HIDDEN TOOTH

All dragons obsess over the protection of their hoards. It is this incessant paranoia that provoked the red dragon sorcerer Thalinion to invent the *hidden tooth* some centuries ago. Since that time their use has become widespread.

This dragon's tooth looks much like any other, and comes in a variety of sizes depending upon the



dragon from which it was initially taken. When a creature of the dragon type places the tooth in its mouth, the tooth seals tightly to its jaw in the place of a missing tooth. When not in a dragon's mouth, the *hidden tooth* possesses an opening at the top that leads to an extra-dimensional space. The space can hold 30 cubic feet of volume weighing no more than 250 pounds. However, the hole at the top is never more than 6 inches across (and often much smaller), limiting the size of individual items that can be placed inside. No matter how many coins, gems, rings, or wands the dragon might store, the tooth never weighs more than a normal tooth of its size, and using the *hidden tooth* has no effect on the dragon's bite attack. After the dragon dies, a DC 30 Search check reveals the *hidden tooth,* and a DC 20 Strength check removes it.

Moderate conjuration and transmutation; CL 9th; Craft Wondrous Item, *disguise self, Leomund's secret chest,* creator must be a dragon; Price 3,850 gp; Weight 1 lb.

PECTORAL OF OBSIDIAN HIDE

This jeweled metal disk bears the holy symbol of Chronepsis, the draconic deity of fate. Black leather straps inlaid with golden chains go over a dragon's forelimbs and wings and hold it in place over the chest. When worn, the scales of a protected dragon take on a dusky, stonelike quality.

While wearing the *pectoral of obsidian hide,* a dragon's damage reduction maintains its value, but changes from magic to adamantine. For example, a young adult brass dragon wearing the *pectoral of obsidian* hide would have DR 5/adamantine instead of its normal DR 5/magic. While the pectoral resizes for the wearer, it has been crafted for a dragon's unique shape and does not function for creatures of other types. The *pectoral of obsidian hide* must be worn for 24 hours before its magic begins to function.

Moderate transmutation; CL 11th; Craft Arms and Armor, creator must be of the dragon type, *stoneskin;* Price 67,500 gp; Weight 5 lb.

ROD OF DRAGON'S BLOOD

This tall rod is sized for the use of a massive dragon, but a Medium creature can still hold it as a quarterstaff. Carved from the bone of a dragon and covered in draconic runes, this russet-stained rod gains its color by the boiling dragon blood in which it is created.

A *rod of dragon's blood* provides some benefits for those with draconic heritage. When held by a sorcerer, creature of the dragon type (but not true dragons, who receive a greater boon), or a half-dragon, a *lesser rod*

of dragon's blood allows the wielder to recast any spell of up to 2nd level he cast in the previous round, once per day. A *greater rod of dragon's blood* allows its wielder to recast any spell of up to 4th level he cast in the previous round, once per day. These abilities do not function when the rod is held by a true dragon.

When held by a true dragon the *rod of dragon's blood* reveals its true power. A *lesser rod of dragon's blood* grants a dragon the ability to reuse any spell-like ability the dragon used in the previous round. It can only do this once per day per spell-like ability. A *greater rod of dragon's blood* allows the dragon to reuse its spell-like abilities three times per day each, and 24 hours must pass after the third use before it can be used again. It otherwise functions as a *lesser rod of dragon's blood.*

Strong transmutation; CL 17th; Craft Rod, creator must be able to cast spells without preparation; Price 8,000 gp (lesser), 50,000 gp (greater); Weight 4 lb.

VIAL OF EXPLOSIVE BREATH

This smoky crystal vial is closed with a golden stopper, capped by a clear piece of quartz. Prized by creatures with breath weapons, a *vial of explosive breath* offers a surprise for those who think they know what to expect from a foe.

By uncapping the vial a dragon, or any creature with a breath weapon, can discharge one use of its breath weapon into the *vial of explosive breath.* The crystal atop the stopper glows with a faint light when the vial contains a stored breath.

The charged vial can be hurled as a grenade weapon. This results in the breath discharging in a 20-foot-radius spread centered upon the point of impact. This decreases the saving throw DC to resist damage or other effects of the breath weapon by –2. The effects of the breath weapon are otherwise determined as if the breath had come from the creature that breathed into the vial directly.

The *vial of explosive breath* is destroyed in the explosion and cannot be reused.

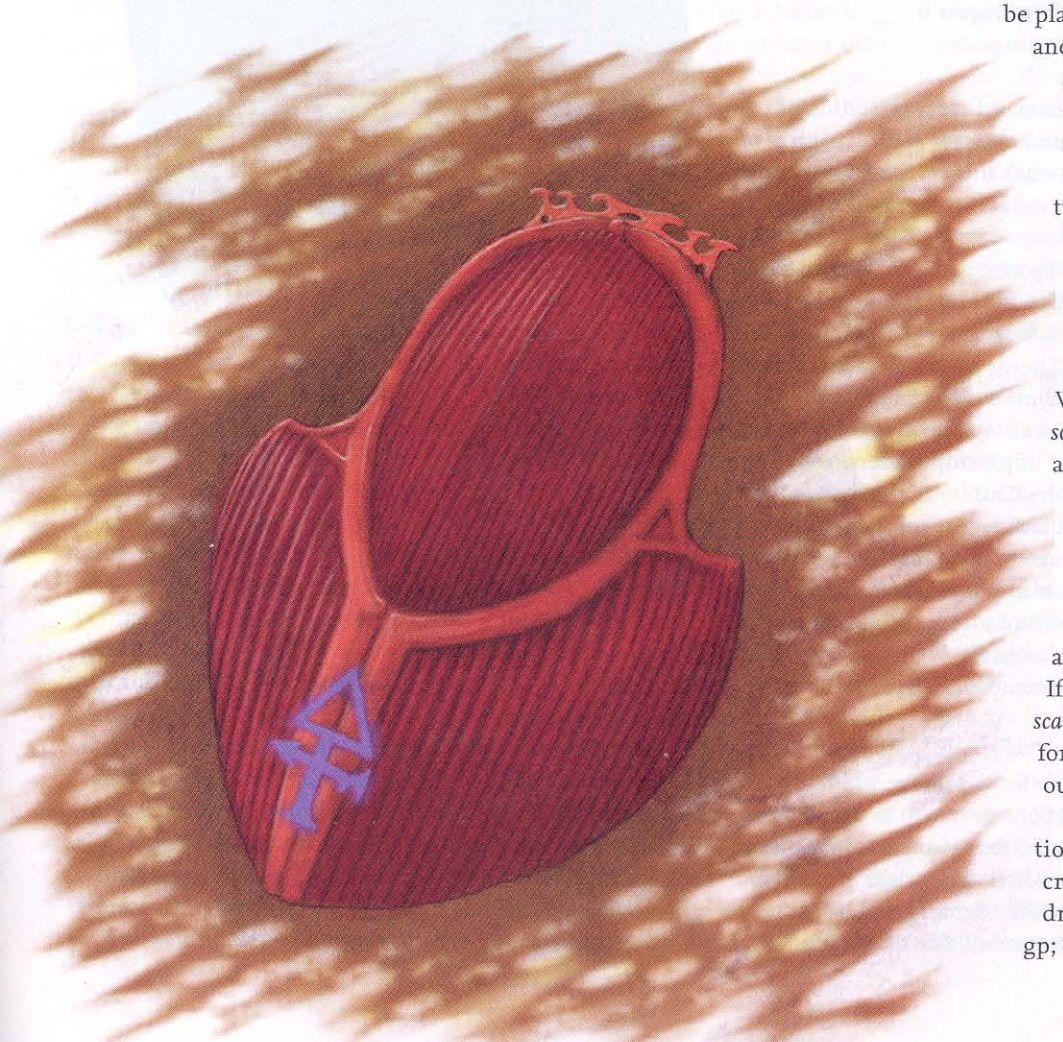
Moderate transmutation; CL 11th; Craft Wondrous Item, *wind wall;* Price 3,300 gp; Weight —.

WAND SCALE

This magically enchanted scale appears as any other scale upon a dragon's forelimb except for a single glowing rune of magic. This scale allows dragons to use wands created for Small or Medium creatures without difficulty.

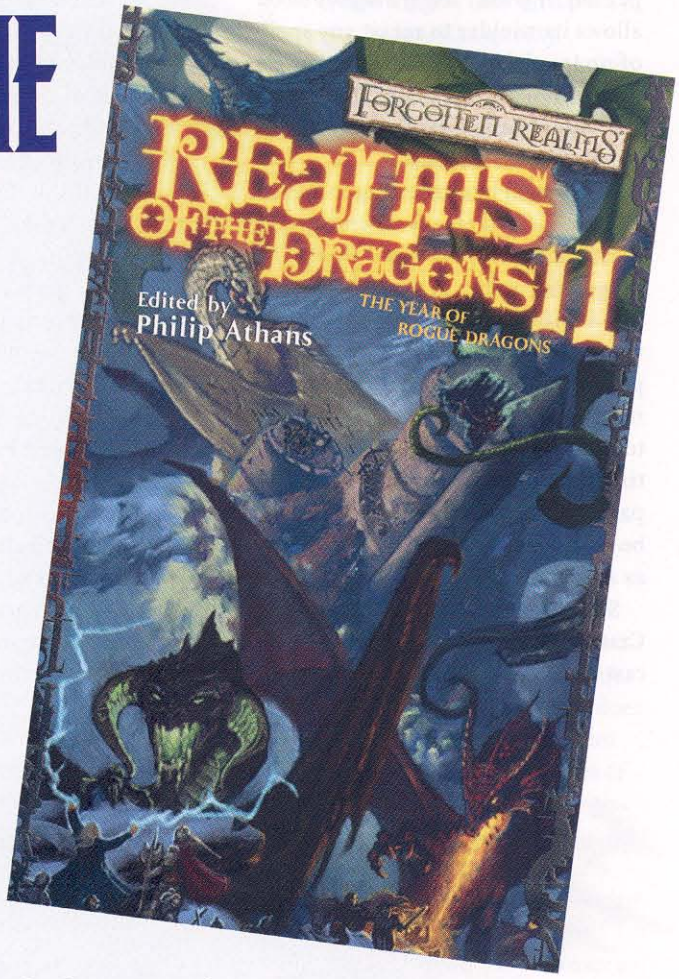
A dragon must hold the *wand scale* to its forelimb, where the scale then melds into its limb. Any wand of a spell known to the dragon (as a spell or spell-like ability) can then be placed upon the *wand scale* and absorbed within. Once absorbed, the dragon can use the stored wand normally without provoking attacks of opportunity, except that the dragon need not hold the wand. Each casting of the spell drains one charge from the wand as normal. While within the *wand scale,* a wand cannot be disarmed. The wand cannot be removed from the *wand scale* until all of its charges are used, at which point the drained wand appears and falls away from the *wand scale.* If the dragon dies the *wand scale* drops off the dragon's forelimb and the wand falls out of the *wand scale.*

Moderate transmutation; CL 9th; Craft Wand, creator must be of the dragon type; Price 8,000 gp; Weight 1 lb.



by J.L. Collins, Kameron M. Franklin, Ed Gentry, Harley Stroh, Erin Tettensor • compiled by Ed Gentry • illustrated by Matt Stawicki and Jeff Carlisle

REALMS OF THE DRAGONS II



This year dragons of all colors rage across the skies of Faerûn. Dark wings blot out the moon and stars; villages fall to ruin under storms of fire, lightning, and ice; and a bestial taint that threatens never to lift dominates the minds of nearly all wyrms. While dark powers capitalize on draconic fears, a daring few seek to free the world's dragons of their feral affliction, changing lives and the Realms in ways that could never have been imagined. This is the Year of Rogue Dragons, and these are the stories told in the newly released anthology *Realms of the Dragons II*.

THE STORIES

Realms of the Dragons II presents a diverse collection of stories, many revolving around the lives and adventures of some of the FORGOTTEN REALM's most powerful creatures.

THE ROAD HOME

In this tale by Harley Stroh, a young barbarian named Saskia comes to work as a sellsword in the brutal Company of the Chimera. Saskia quickly finds herself at odds with the rest of the Chimeras, but like a wolf needs a pack a barbarian needs a tribe and the Chimeras become Saskia's family.

This all changes when the company buys a captured pseudodragon from a band of passing traders. Tormented and mutilated by the Chimeras, the dragon Aeristhax retains his pride and anger, refusing to surrender his dignity to the mercenary company.

Aeristhax reminds Saskia what it means to be savage, to live beyond the arbitrary laws and social customs of mankind. Together the two make a bid for freedom, facing down one of the strongest fighting companies in the Realms.

A TALL TALE

Written by J.L. Collins, this tale focuses on five youths, an abandoned barn, and instructions on how to feed a dragon. There's not much excitement for four young teenagers who live in a lumbering camp until Nollo—the visiting son of a caravan master—arrives, boastfully claiming that he has not only seen a dragon but fed one as well. The reactions of the local teens range from amusement to disbelief, but all eagerly listen and even offer their own opinions about what (or whom) dragons eat.

When the truth of his story is disputed, Nollo's pride gets the better of him and he issues a challenge to the local youths, claiming that he can prove his story.

HOW BURLMARR SAVED THE UNSEEN PROTECTOR

Kameron M. Franklin's story demonstrates that no one thinks twice about a dragon playing the role of protector. Stories abound of dragons watching over sacred sites, long lost knowledge, or their vast treasure hoard. Yet, what happens when the protector needs protecting?

Palarandusk, an ancient gold wyrm whose past includes enslavement to a wizard master and a stint as a guardian of grand secrets, spends his waning years as the protector of a small village of gnomes. Targeted by the Arcane Brotherhood for use in its nefarious plots, the wizened gold ends up requiring the help of a psionically talented young gnome to free him from the wizards'

magical snare. Unfortunately, the gnome is a developing wilder, and his newfound psionic abilities could harm him and all he cares for if he pushes himself too far.

FREEDOM'S PROMISE

Ed Gentry's story "Freedom's Promise" features two men paying the costs of their ambitions, a dragon all-too happy to make them pay, and a trapped civilization hidden in the middle of it all.

Centuries ago, Aniolon Gruanthe, a wizard of no small power, led a small band of men and women into the desert where they hoped to forge a new life for themselves. Chased by mercenaries from their oppressive homeland, Gruanthe and his followers desperately sought help from a deceptive blue wyrm.

Hundreds of years later, Kinase Bronihim sets out to change his station in life. Seeking the Evise Jhontil, an artifact that he believes will solve his woes, Bronihim finds himself face to face with the same blue wyrm, who presents him with an opportunity he cannot pass up.

TAKING INSPIRATION

Realms of the Dragons II presents a wide variety of adventure and role-playing-inspiring themes.

POWERS OF DESTINY

Stroh's "The Road Home" pivots on the questions of destiny and fate. In this tale, only when Saskia embraces her destiny does she come full circle, reclaiming her savage nature and finally tapping into her eldritch potential. The idea of others helping to unlock one's future is a twist on the meaning of destiny and fate. This concept might create more questions for a character. Was the person who helped the character unlock her potential fated to be in her life, or was the meeting merely coincidental?

In D&D, this same theme might be expressed in a variety of ways. Perhaps an agent of a character's past comes bearing a powerful magic heirloom that is both a blessing and a curse. Templates and plane-touched player races also give characters heritages they might hate but are ultimately unable to deny. Magic-using or other powerful NPCs might even detect the spark of power within the most nondescript characters, helping them unlock their buried talents and leading them down the path to their first levels as sorcerers or one of the psionic classes.

THE RAGE

The Year of Rogue Dragons trilogy (*The Rage, The Rite,* and the 2006 release, *The Ruin*) by Richard Lee Byers, tells of a dire threat to all the FORGOTTEN REALMS. The Rage—a magical affliction that throws dragons into an uncontrollable bloodlust—has returned, more virulent than ever before. Driven mad by this recurring scourge, dragons murderously rampage across the land, leaving only devastation in their wake.

Although the Rage of Dragons largely falls into the realm of legend for most of the short-lived humanoid races, past occurrences are well documented and evidence of dragon strikes can be found throughout Faerûn. Largely unpredictable, the last devastating outbreak of the Rage took place in 1018 DR, the Year of the Dracorage, when flights of dragons of all colors laid ruin to great portions of the Heartlands. Even today, on the northern banks of the Moonsea, the city of Phlan (annihilated in the Rage of 1018) remains divided into the reconstructed New City, and the wild, walled-off ruins of the Old City. Such is the power of the Rage that more than 350 years later, festering scars still remain.

Yet, with this new outbreak, the Rage threatens never to end.

LONELINESS

Loneliness serves as one of the most important themes in Erin Tettensor's "Faerie Ire." Some people go to great lengths for a little attention, which might provide an unusual twist for a campaign. The motivations of adventurers—and those who hire them—are not always as simple as greed, honor, or courage.

For player characters, loneliness might act as a powerful incentive to take up adventuring in the first place, and might even continue to influence their behavior once they do. Lonely characters might seem reckless. After all, risking everything is much easier when there's not much to risk. On the other hand, once he feels comfortable with the party, the lone wolf might be incredibly protective of his comrades, inspiring the character to acts of extraordinary selflessness.

For DMs, a lonely NPC can add unexpected twists to a plot. Perhaps a party investigates "evil spirits" haunting a remote keep, only to discover they are the work of a noblewoman and the adventurers are only there to amuse her. Even the real undead might cause trouble out of a simple desire for a little company.

UNLIKELY HEROES

"How Burlmarr Saved the Unseen Protector" touches upon the whimsical theme of the sidekick saving the hero. This theme offers some great opportunities to mix low-level characters with more powerful entities while still giving them the feeling they are making a difference.

Perhaps a major NPC has been laid low by some strange disease and needs help in finding the cure so he can return to battle against a threat too great for the low-level characters. Alternatively, a potent magic item that falls into the hands of player characters might also attract the attention of powerful forces, but whether such forces

move to help or hinder the PCs could affect the path of an entire adventure.

AGES OF RUIN

Long before the threat of the never-ending Rage, the Realms faced untold apocalyptic threats. From the collapse of ancient magic to the gods thrown from their celestial and hellish thrones, disaster has shaped the course of Faerûn's history. In one case, however, some believe it was a single treacherous item that brought about the ruin of an entire civilization.

THE EVISE JHONTIL

Centuries ago, the clergy of Set prayed to their god for help in their battle against an oppressive nation. The Father of Jackals answered those prayers with a powerful magic relic called the Evise Jhontil. Thought to have played a role in the destruction of the Ilmakari civilization, the relic remains as deadly as it is ancient. Some even insist that Set still watches over the artifact and weaves plots leading the ambitions and unwise to unleash his power again.

In Ed Gentry's story "Freedom's Promise," the power and history of this treacherous artifact are revealed. The Evise Jhontil is a lesser artifact, shaped like a diamond and standing nearly four feet long and two feet wide. When touched, the artifact causes any spell cast by its bearer to become permanent, as per the spell *permanency* (if the spell is an applicable target to be affected by *permanency*). The artifact's owner does not need to meet the requirements of minimum caster level for *permanency* to affect his spells and loses no XP. However, the Evise Jhontil extols a price in the form of life from its user, inflicting an amount of Constitution drain equal to the spell level of any spell made permanent. In addition, the Evise Jhontil forges a bond between the spellcaster and his magic, forever bonding the caster's life to his spells. Any spells cast and made permanent by a user of the Evise Jhontil cannot be dispelled by any magical means, even the use of an *antimagic field*, *miracle*, *Mordenkainen's disjunction*, or *wish*. However, once a caster dies, any spells made permanent by his use of the Evise Jhontil immediately end (even if he no longer possesses the artifact). Willingly attaining some form of undeath is not considered dying for the purposes of ending magic made permanent by the Evise Jhontil.

Strong universal; CL 18th; Weight 10 lb.

by Andy Collins
illustrated by Niklas Janssen

OFFICIAL ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

This month, the Sage considers a wide range of matters arcane (as in *Complete Arcane*), and comes clean on some erroneous pontifications from an earlier column. You can email the Sage your questions at **sageadvice@paizo.com**.

How often can the warlock (from *Complete Arcane*) use his *eldritch blast*?

The warlock may use his *eldritch blast* at will. There is no daily limit to its use (nor to any of his other spell-like abilities, for that matter).

Does the warlock's *eldritch blast* require a standard action to use or does it take the place of an attack (thus making it possible to fire multiple *eldritch blasts* in a round if you have multiple attacks)?

As a spell-like ability, an *eldritch blast* requires a standard action to use. Having a base attack bonus of +6 or greater does not allow the warlock to use his *eldritch blast* multiple times per round.

What kind of damage does the warlock's *eldritch blast* deal? Does resistance or immunity to energy or damage reduction protect against the blast?

In its basic form, the *eldritch blast's* damage has no type. As it is a spell-like ability, damage reduction does not protect against the *eldritch blast*. Since it does not deal energy damage, resistance or immunity to energy has no effect on the *eldritch blast's* damage.

Certain eldritch essence invocations change the type of damage dealt by the *eldritch blast*. For example, *brimstone blast* makes the *eldritch blast* deal fire damage, which means that resistance or immunity to fire would apply against this *eldritch blast's* damage (as would vulnerability to fire, such as that possessed by a frost giant).

What kind of action is required to apply an eldritch essence invocation or blast shape invocation to the warlock's *eldritch blast*? How long do these invocations last once applied?

No action is required to apply an eldritch essence or blast shape invocation to the *eldritch blast;* it's done as part of using the *eldritch blast* itself.

Eldritch essence and blast shape invocations affect only the *eldritch blast* to which they are applied. The warlock may apply them again to later blasts as desired.

The warlock's *eldritch blast* description states that it causes half damage to objects. Can a wielded weapon or worn armor be the target of an *eldritch blast*? Does an *eldritch blast* cause half damage to constructs?

The *eldritch blast* can target an object, including a wielded weapon or suit of armor. A construct is a creature, not an object, and thus suffers normal damage from the *eldritch blast.*

Are golems immune to the warlock's *eldritch blast*?

As it is a spell-like ability that allows spell resistance, golems are immune to the warlock's *eldritch blast.* The warlock who faces a clay golem with nothing but his *eldritch blast* is in just as much trouble as the sorcerer with nothing but *magic missile* and *lightning bolt* in his arsenal. The *vitriolic blast* eldritch essence invocation (*Complete Arcane,* page 136) allows the warlock to overcome this problem, since *vitriolic blast* ignores spell resistance.

Does a warlock's *hideous blow* invocation (*Complete Arcane,* page 134) require one standard action to use the *hideous blow* and another round to strike with a melee weapon, or can the *hideous blow* and the melee weapon attack be done as a single standard action?

Making an attack with *hideous blow* is considered part of the same standard action as using the *hideous blow* invocation (much like the casting of a touch spell allows an attack to be made as part of the spell's casting).

Does *hideous blow* provoke an attack of opportunity?

Yes. As a spell-like ability, using *hideous blow* provokes attacks of opportunity just as any other spell-like ability would. A warlock who relies on this invocation should consider investing ranks in the Concentration skill so that he may use it defensively.

Note that it is the act of using the invocation, not the act of making the touch attack, which draws the attack of opportunity, since the warlock delivering *hideous blow* is considered "armed" (just like a spellcaster delivering a touch spell).

The warlock's deceive item class feature (*Complete Arcane,* page 8) allows him to take 10 on Use Magic Device checks "even if distracted or threatened," but the Use Magic Device skill

says you can't ever take 10, regardless of distraction. Does deceive item also let the warlock ignore this restriction?

This class feature really does two things. First, it allows the warlock to take 10 on Use Magic Device skill checks (a boon all by itself). Second, it allows him to take 10 on such checks even in conditions where that would normally not be possible.

What effect would the Practiced Spellcaster feat (*Complete Arcane*, page 82) have on a warlock?

A strict reading of the feat's benefit indicates that the warlock would gain no benefit from Practiced Spellcaster. The warlock is not a spellcasting class for normal purposes—the exception noted on page 18 of *Complete Arcane* applies only to prestige class benefits—and thus it could not be selected as the class to be affected by this feat.

Since a warlock does not possess spell slots can he qualify for the epic feats Master Staff and Master Wand (*Complete Arcane*, page 192)?

Having spell slots is not a prerequisite to select either of these feats, so the warlock is free to choose them if he meets the prerequisites. However, since using either feat requires the character to expend spell slots, these feats would be useless to the warlock. Just because you meet the prerequisites of a feat is no guarantee that you'll be able to use the feat to any beneficial effect (for example, Empower Spell has no prerequisites, but it's useless to any character who can't cast spells of at least 2nd level).

I have two questions about the *warding* class feature of the Initiate of the Sevenfold Veil (*Complete Arcane*, page 44).

1) *Personal warding* says that it affects "any creature striking at" the initiate. Does the attacker have to hit the initiate for this effect to occur?

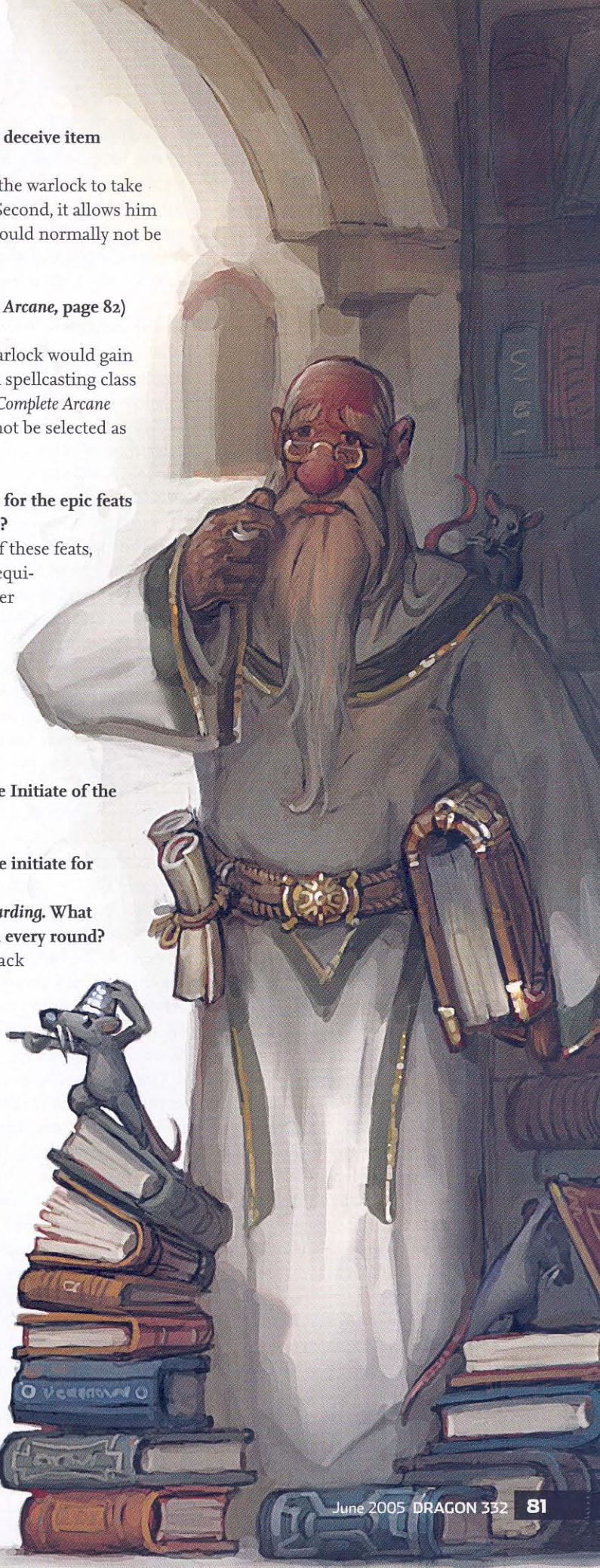
2) *Area warding* says it affects any creature entering the *warding*. What about creatures who remain inside—does it affect them every round?

1) No. "Striking at" means "attacking," so any melee attack against the initiate would trigger the *personal warding's* effect.

2) No. It only affects a creature as it enters the *warding*. Once inside, it doesn't suffer the same ill effect each round. However, once inside and adjacent to the initiate, the creature would then be protected by the ward.

Do feats that grant spell-like abilities, such as Spell Hand (*Complete Arcane*, page 83), have to be taken at 1st level? If not, how is this rationalized in game terms—how does a character suddenly learn to use spell-like abilities?

No. If this were the case it would clearly be stated in the feat's description (see Precocious Apprentice on page 181 for an example). As for explaining it in terms of the game world, the Sage advises thinking of it as a sudden manifestation of a latent (but until-now unknown) ability—only now has the character realized his innate magical talents, even though they were present and hidden beforehand.



The Mage Slayer feat (*Complete Arcane*, page 81) states that acquiring this feat drops your caster level by 4. Is this only for arcane caster levels or also for divine caster levels? If it also applies to divine caster levels, why? Why would a paladin or cleric be less in tune with his or her deity by being better at attacking arcane spellcasters?

The drawback of the Mage Slayer feat applies to your caster level for all spells, both arcane and divine (as well as to spell-like abilities). Despite the feat's name, the benefits apply against both arcane and divine spellcasters—this feat isn't specifically intended for use by divine casters against arcane casters.

CORRECTIONS

A few of the Sage's answers in DRAGON #326 were a bit off the mark. The Sage regrets these erroneous conclusions, and throws himself on the mercy of the court for leniency.

Here are the corrected answers (with new or updated text underlined), along with the original questions.

How many Hit Dice does my 1st-level pixie rogue have? What would his effective character level be?

Unless noted otherwise, all 1-HD creatures lose their racial HD when they gain class levels. Thus, your pixie would have 1 HD (from his rogue level).

His effective character level (ECL) would be 5 (1 for his HD, plus 4 for his level adjustment), unless he also possessed the *Otto's irresistible dance* spell-like ability, in which case his ECL would be 7 (1 HD + 6 level adjustment). This value shows how powerful a pixie is in campaign play (and is used to determine how many XP he needs to gain levels, as well as the pixie PC's starting wealth), but it has no bearing on most in-game effects.

When my sorcerer *shapechanges* into the form of a creature with special attacks, what Hit Dice do I use to calculate the DC of those abilities—the creature's normal HD, my caster level, or something else?

When you use *shapechange* (or related magic) to assume another creature's form, your Hit Dice are considered to be the same as your normal HD.

For example, an 18th-level human sorcerer *shapechanged* into a dire bear would be treated as an 18-HD creature for the purpose of determining what effect an evil cleric's *blasphemy* spell might have upon him. A 17th-level elf wizard *shapechanged* into a horned devil would use his own 17 HD to determine the save DC of his fear aura, stun, and infernal wound supernatural attacks.

Can you clarify how Challenge Ratings for traps work? Is the CR of a trap intended to be equivalent to the CR of a monster? If so, does the party (or the party's rogue) gain experience for overcoming a trap of a given CR? Are traps limited to a maximum CR of 10, or is this just the toughest level for which sample traps are listed in the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*?

A trap's CR means the same thing that a monster's CR does—it rates the relative threat of the trap, and indicates the XP award granted to the party for overcoming it. A trap is overcome either by disarming it—which gives XP to the whole group, not just the character responsible for disarming it—or simply for setting it off and suffering its effects, for which normal XP is awarded.

Traps above CR 10 aren't included in the rules because the XP award for such traps wouldn't necessarily be appropriate to the trap's challenge. At a certain point, it becomes nearly impossible to adequately rate a trap's challenge for high-level PCs. Not only are Search and Disable Device skill modifiers extremely high, but it's difficult for a trap's effect (typically a one-shot effect) to be balanced to challenge but not wipe out characters. Challenge Rating 10 traps already include instant-death effects, and it's tough to get more dangerous than that.

Dragon

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by Hal Maclean

VISION QUESTS

BARBARIAN

Suffering opens doors to realms of power. All barbarians understand this. When a barbarian faces a problem, one requiring the assistance of the spirit world, he has the option of going on a vision quest.

A vision quest is an optional rule that can be granted by the DM in a time of need or when situations warrant. Barbarians can gain access to vision quests at any time by taking the Altered State feat.

The Vision Quest: All vision quests begin with an ordeal, some kind of self-inflicted anguish that ritually cleanses and prepares you to enter the spirit realm. The exact nature of this ordeal varies from tribe to tribe. Some demand extended fasts, confinement in searing sweat lodges, or submersion in water until nearly drowned. Whatever its form, the ordeal must tax both mind and body.

Before beginning your ordeal, you must decide how much time you wish to spend in your vision quest: 3d20 minutes for a random result, 2d12 hours for the choice of two random results, or 1d6 days to choose your result. (The DM rolls secretly to determine the exact duration.) During that time, you must remain in meditation and cannot sleep, eat, or drink (characters occasionally die of thirst on long vision quests). You may drop out of your ordeal and begin anew later. At the end of the requisite time, you may attempt to temporarily leave your body and enter the spirit realm. Entering the spirit realm requires you to succeed at a DC 20 level check. This arduous process is like unraveling the soul and deals 1d4 points of Wisdom damage, regardless of success. A failed level check requires you to begin the ordeal anew, while a successful check allows you to enter the spirit world.

The spirit world teems with totem spirits, animals that grant power to those who gain their favor. To gain the favor of a totem spirit, you must succeed at a DC 20 Handle Animal check. You may retry the check as many times as you wish, but each attempt requires 10 minutes. Finally, once you gain the favor of a totem spirit you awaken to discover that your spirit totem has granted you a gift. The gift remains for one day per level of the class that allows you to enter a vision quest, after which you must go on another vision quest to acquire a new gift.

ALTERED STATE [GENERAL]

You gain the ability to perform a vision quest.

Benefit: You can perform a ritual known as a vision quest. Upon successfully completing a vision quest, you gain one of the benefits described in the Gift of the Spirits sidebar.

GIFT OF THE SPIRITS

d%	Totem Spirit	Bonuses
1–12	Bear	+1 inherent bonus on Strength-based skill checks and +4 insight bonus on attempts to disarm a foe when unarmed.
13–25	Boar	+1 hit point per level and +2 bonus on saves made to resist fear effects.
26–37	Eagle	+2 bonus on Reflex saves and +1 bonus on damage dealt while grappling.
38–50	Hare	Base land speed increases by 10 feet and +1 bonus on initiative rolls.
51–62	Lion	+2 bonus on Will saves and +1 insight bonus on attack and damage rolls when charging.
63–75	Rat	+2 bonus on Fortitude saves and +1 insight bonus on attack and damage rolls when surrounded by squares threatened by foes.
76–87	Shark	Cumulative +1 circumstance bonus on attack rolls for every successful consecutive attack made against the same target (maximum +4). This bonus ends at the end of the encounter.
88–00	Wolf	+4 bonus on trip attempts and +1 insight bonus on attack rolls made against targets suffering from disease, poison, or ability damage.

by John E. Ling, Jr.

WHERE DID YOU GO TO COLLEGE?

BARD

Many bards get by on natural talent alone. They learn to play an instrument from a parent and from there learn to tap into the magic of music. Many other bards, however, attend special bardic colleges scattered throughout the lands. There they learn to fine-tune their craft, producing music or poetics for the ages. Curriculum at these schools includes much more than music, however. Bards learn languages, study magic theory, learn history, and explore nature, among other activities. The benefits provided by the choice of school is only partially offset by its penalty, therefore the use of the optional benefits and penalties of these schools requires your DM's approval.

BLACKBURN COLLEGE

Founded by the gnome bard Mikel Blackburn, this school continues to grow in popularity—but not for its academics. Blackburn College has a strong reputation for debauchery. Officials often turn a blind eye to the misbehavior of the student body, often because the faculty joins in with the students. Time spent actually learning at the college is short—requiring only one year—although many students stay much longer. The unstructured curriculum places a heavy emphasis on developing social skills at the cost of practical knowledge.

Attendees of this college—no one really ever graduates—receive a +1 bonus on Diplomacy and Gather Information checks. The lack of actual studying hurts in the long run, however, and attendees treat Knowledge (dungeoneering) and Knowledge (the planes) as cross-class skills.

BRENDELWOOD ACADEMY

Situated on the rolling hills just outside a small forest, the stately Brendelwood Academy attracts aspiring singers and poets from all over the world. Students of this prestigious school spend four years learning the intricacies of bardic magic and music abilities. The faculty takes full advantage of the nearby Brendelwood Forest, using the area as a chance to teach students about life through nature.

Bards who graduate from Brendelwood Academy gain a +1 bonus on all Climb and Knowledge (nature) checks. Bards from Brendelwood Academy treat Knowledge (dungeoneering) and Hide as cross-class skills.

HIGHSPIRE UNIVERSITY

Highspire University is the most prestigious bardic college active today. Originally housed in a wizard's tower several centuries ago, expansion has caused the school to spread out and cover the wide area that comprises its current campus. The original tower still houses the university's administration. Hosting a culturally diverse program, Highspire University specializes in immersive education programs that enrich the lives of its students.

Graduates of this school gain a +1 bonus on all Knowledge (history) and Knowledge (the planes) checks. On the other hand, alumni treat Disguise and Sleight of Hand as cross-class skills.

SOCIETY OF SYMPHONIC SORTILEGE

The Society of Symphonic Sortilege is more a network of associates than an actual college. Most major cities—and many minor ones as well—support branches that represent the society. Students agree to an apprenticeship for a length of two years. During this time, they vigorously study both the theory and practice of all manner of magic.

Students who successfully complete an internship receive a +1 bonus on all Decipher Script and Knowledge (arcana) checks. However, due to a lack of physical training, Escape Artist and Tumble become cross-class skills for graduates of the society.

by Amber E. Scott

MARTIAL SYMBOLISM

CLERIC

Clerics display their faith primarily through words and actions, but also with their attire and weapons. Not all clerics choose to wield their deity's favored weapon, and some do not worship a specific deity at all.

Every domain has a set of symbols associated with it, and one of the ways a cleric can pay homage is through the use of a weapon tied to that domain's symbolism. Most clerics use the favored weapons of their deities, but domain symbols can help them select backup weapons.

Air: Weapons with bulbous ends, such as maces and morningstars, represent clouds.

Animal: Unarmed strikes, spiked gauntlets, and punching daggers simulate animals' natural weapons. Pronged and hooked weapons like ranseurs, sickles, and tridents symbolize claws and teeth.

Chaos: Weapons that surprise their targets best evince chaos. Examples include those that trip or disarm opponents, such as guisarmes, halberds, and whips.

Death: A scythe or sickle makes a natural choice for death-oriented clerics. Axes and other weapons with wide, curving blades remind opponents of an executioner's axe.

Destruction: Weapons that can do grievous amounts of harm (as represented by high critical multipliers), such as picks, scythes, and many two-handed melee weapons suitably reflect the Destruction domain.

Earth: Bludgeoning weapons conjure impressions of great boulders and crushing rocks. Hammers and picks double as actual stoneworking tools. Sling bullets made of stone work well as ranged weapons.

Evil: Slashing weapons or those that deal multiple types of damage (such as morningstars) often leave disfiguring scars and represent the lingering nature of evil.

Fire: Clerics attuned with fire favor light weapons that flash quickly through an enemy's defenses. They often choose daggers, darts, and rapiers.

Good: Weapons with straight edges reflect both the straight path clerics must walk and the unyielding determination the forces of good possess. Hammers, lances, and straight-edged swords work well as symbols.

Healing: Healers prefer nets, saps, and unarmed strikes, as they deal nonlethal or no damage.

Knowledge: Weapons with complex mechanical parts, such as crossbows (particularly repeating crossbows) represent a cleric's devotion to knowledge, as do exotic weapons that take much study to use properly, such as nunchaku and sianghams.

Law: Sturdy, unyielding weapons symbolize the balance of law. Lances, quarterstaffs, and spears make good melee choices, while javelins work as ranged weapons.

Luck: Luck priests favor weapons with large threat ranges (like kukris and rapiers), since they increase the chance of striking a lucky blow.

Magic: Stars often symbolize magic. Shuriken and the spiked heads of morningstars and flails reflect such celestial bodies.

Plant: Flexible weapons like whips simulate vines and stems, and piercing weapons like picks and darts represent thorns.

Protection: Clerics concerned with protection find regular or spiked shields (to bash with) and spiked armor perfectly symbolic weapons.

Strength: Two-handed weapons are a natural choice for strength-revering clerics. For ranged weapons they prefer composite bows and thrown weapons like javelins.

Sun: Long, flat weapons, like swords of all types, symbolize the rays of the sun. Round weapons, like bolas, flail heads, and sling bullets also evoke the sun's circular nature.

Travel: As a walking aid, a quarterstaff is both functional and representative of travel. Any pole arm, such as a glaive or ranseur, works just as well.

Trickery: Followers of trickery like tripping and disarming weapons such as nets, spiked chains, and whips.

War: War clerics prefer the weapons commonly used by soldiers in their homeland. These usually include battleaxes, crossbows, lances, spears, and straight-edged swords.

Water: Wide, curved blades, like those of double-axes, falchions, greataxes, and scythes recall images of cresting waves.

by Peter A. von Bleichert

THE SOCIETY

Druids of most campaigns belong to a fraternal and secretive druidic society. Dderwydd Chymdeithas is an example of one such society that can fit easily into most campaigns.

DDERWYDD CHYMDEITHAS

Dderwydd Chymdeithas (pronounced approximately: therWITH khimdeiTHAS), sometimes simply called the "Society," is an invisible organization that spans the world. Its foundations survived a time when urban-minded folk persecuted, hunted, and murdered druids. It protects its secret culture, knowledge, and rituals with the Druidic language.

Nine regional gatherings, or Eisteddfod, comprise the Society. Within each, nine high-level druids preside over all others. Three powerful druids circulate among the gatherings.

An Eisteddfod convenes at spring (Gwanwyn) and winter (Gaeaf) conjunctions, as well as once per month for the ritual worship of Obad-Hai and Ehlonna.

ORDERS

Seven orders, called Gorsedd, exist among and answer to the regional gatherings. Each Gorsedd specializes in a specific art druids consider important or sacred.

Borthfforia: Tasked with understanding the planes and interplanar travel, members of this order explore and chart the planes. This vigilance helps forewarn the Society of unwelcome arrivals from other planes.

Gwir: Concerned with understanding the One Life and Truth, the Gwir are students of morality and philosophy. They seek to awaken creative genius through sensory depravation, spending days in the darkness and quiet of mound chambers.

Hallta: Scattered among craggy seaside rocks and spits of land, members of this loose-knit order live by, on, and under the sea. Informally called "Salts," the Society relies on these ocean druids for covert trans-oceanic communications.

Hofydd: Healers and seers, these druids use natural cures mixed with magic to aid the injured and dying. Hofydd also seek to understand and develop natural powers of the mind, such as with psionics.

Nial: Known to the outside world as Retributors, these hunters of aberrations and the undead strike hard and fast. The combat-focused Nial occasionally call on local allies to complete their work.

'R Rhosyn: The 'R Rhosyn seek out and identify the natural world's treasures to establish means of protecting them. The order specializes in restoring damaged environments and protects a vast but secret seed bank.

Saer: The Saer expand and protect the ancient knowledge of astronomy and engineering. They design and build the Society's largest cairns, tombs, mounds, and celestial observatories.

THE SOCIETY'S TEACHINGS

The following feat reflects membership in the Society. Initiate feats first appeared in the *Eberron Campaign Setting*.

Dderwydd Chymdeithas Initiate [General]

You have been trained in the ancient druidic tradition of the Dderwydd Chymdeithas, and are a member of the general body of the Society.

Prerequisite: Ability to spontaneously cast *summon nature's ally*.

Benefit: Choose one of the following skills: Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (history), Knowledge (local), Knowledge (religion), or Knowledge (the planes). Add the chosen skill to your list of druid class skills.

In addition, you can cast the following spells as if they were on the druid spell list at the indicated level.

1st level: *disguise self*
2nd level: *undetectable alignment*
3rd level: *helping hand*
4th level: *sending*
5th level: *teleport*
6th level: *shadow walk*
7th level: *sequester*
8th level: *discern location*
9th level: *etherealness*

by Greg Marks

FLEXIBLE FIGHTERS

Many fighters learn Power Attack or Combat Expertise, but few fighters have the vision to create and master a new weapon style feat. Those few weapon masters who possess such skill gain access to unique abilities unexpected by their foes, offering them flexibility in combat that other fighters can never match. Working toward one of these signature fighting styles can lend focus to your fighter and distinguish him from every other sword-and-shield-wielding brute.

Chapter 3 of *Complete Warrior* introduced weapon style feats. See that chapter for more information on these kinds of feats.

BITE OF STEEL [STYLE]

You have mastered fighting with a sai in your off hand to counter other two-weapon fighters.

Prerequisites: Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (sai), base attack bonus +5.

Benefit: As part of a full-attack action with a sai in your off hand, you may make an opposed attack roll using your off-hand weapon against an opponent who is also using two weapons. If successful, you pin your opponent's off-hand weapon and he may not use it on his next action. Due to the design of the sai, you receive a +4 bonus on the attack roll made to pin your opponent's off-hand weapon. If you have more than one attack with your off-hand weapon, you may attempt to pin your opponent's off-hand weapon more than once. If successful, you lose any additional attacks you might receive with your off hand until your next turn. If your opponent moves outside your reach, this restriction is removed. Your opponent can choose to drop the weapon instead of suffering this restriction.

DEVASTATING THUNDER [STYLE]

You have mastered fighting from the back of a horse, making such devastating charges that you strike fear into the hearts of your enemies.

Prerequisites: Mounted Combat, Spirited Charge, Trample.

Benefit: When successfully making a Spirited Charge you can frighten your enemies. All enemies within 30 feet of the target of your successful charge must succeed on a Will save (DC 5 + half the damage dealt) or be shaken for 1 round. This is a fear effect. Whether or not the save is successful a creature cannot be affected again by the same character's Devastating Thunder ability for 1 hour.

FRONTLINE ARCHER [STYLE]

You have mastered the art of fighting in melee while wielding a longbow.

Prerequisites: Dex 15, proficiency with longbow or composite longbow, Combat Reflexes, Improved Trip, Weapon Focus (composite longbow) or Weapon Focus (longbow).

Benefit: You may use your longbow or composite longbow to make trip attacks. If you trip an opponent while using Frontline Archer, you may immediately make a bonus melee attack against that opponent, using your longbow or composite longbow as a club of equal size as the longbow. This takes the place of any attack you may get for your Improved Trip feat. You may choose to forgo your bonus attack if you desire. A longbow or composite longbow used in this way is treated as magic for the purposes of overcoming DR if it is enchanted, but it otherwise grants no other weapon special abilities (such as flaming).

STORM OF FLYING STRIKES [STYLE]

You have mastered fighting with two weapons to force your enemy off balance.

Prerequisites: Str 15, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Two-Weapon Fighting, base attack bonus +6.

Benefit: You can use Power Attack and a number of successive blows to knock down your foes. To use the Storm of Flying Strikes, you must sacrifice at least five points of base attack using the Power Attack feat and hit your opponent more than once in the same round. If you succeed, your opponent must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 10 + your Strength modifier + the number of times you hit your opponent in the round) or be knocked prone at the end of your attacks. Bonuses for stability apply to this saving throw. Storm of Flying Strikes has no effect on an opponent who is already prone.

FIGHTER

by Joshua Cole

MONK LORE

The wise monk understands that knowledge is—in addition to a path toward enlightenment—power. If a monk wants to survive the rigors of adventuring life, she soon learns to apply her knowledge to practical matters, such as the fighting skills of potential foes.

With the right knowledge, monks can identify the styles, schools, and even individual teachers of their enemies. Such information might mean the difference between slipping effortlessly from an acclaimed master of the Grasping Girallon style and being crushed in an inescapable grapple.

MONASTIC RELIGIOUS TEACHING

Monk PCs rarely take ranks in Knowledge (religion), although it encompasses many important aspects of their training. A monk who simply craves martial prowess can ignore it with little loss, but one who seriously seeks enlightenment disregards her intellectual development at her own peril.

Monks never receive spells for their devotion, but most of the great martial monasteries bow their heads to specific deities. These monks usually learn a fair bit about the rituals and clergy of their associated temples. As one of the most martial branches of their religions, monks of these monasteries learn more than a fair bit about rival faiths.

A monk with ranks in Knowledge (religion) identifies the paraphernalia of her faith and other religious organizations just as easily as a cleric. If she's particularly well informed, she might even recognize the handiwork of various secret sects and shadowy cults simply by knowing their usual methods.

Knowledge (religion) also serves as a barometer of a monk's knowledge of ritual forms and rites. A poor check during an important ceremony might mean disgrace in the eyes of the monastery's masters, while a particularly good check impresses those luminaries more than a dozen successful martial arts bouts.

Monks generally lack effective attacks against the undead. As such, a monk's religious training usually teaches her more about how to identify and avoid undead than how to hunt them down and confront them.

IDENTIFYING STYLES

A monk with ranks in Knowledge (religion) keeps tabs on other monasteries and knows something of their styles. While her interest might be focused on spiritual development, the rest of the party values knowledge of an opponent's martial arts.

DC 10: You know the difference between a monk and a fighter with some unarmed combat training. You recognize the most famous styles of your region. You cannot identify what those styles focus on, however.

DC 15: You can identify the broad martial arts styles of your homeland and its immediate surroundings. When you observe an unarmed combatant you can determine in broad geographical or racial terms where she learned her style. Such knowledge lets you know an opponent trained in a Northern style, as opposed to a Southern style, or a dwarven martial art rather than a hobgoblin one.

DC 20: You are familiar with the specific styles of your region and with broad categories outside it. You know enough to differentiate between monasteries with similar styles and know the most famous practitioners of them.

DC 25: You can identify broad styles simply by hearing a description. When observing a martial artist, you can identify her style precisely, knowing the difference between minor variances, such as those between the Seven Behirs Claw and Seven Behirs Grasp styles.

DC 30: You can identify almost any martial art by reputation alone. When you see a practitioner use her art in person, you not only know her monastery but you also have a good idea which master taught her. You know the names of all the famous masters and many of their notable students.

by Alvin Neo

WYRMSLAYERS

PALADIN

While any paladin might fight a dragon in the course of her battles against evil, wyrmslayer paladins dedicate their lives to learning about these powerful creatures and how to combat them most effectively. Presented here are suggestions for playing a wyrmslayer paladin.

Ethos: Compassion and altruism motivate most wyrmslayers. They fight dragons to prevent the wyrms from harming innocents. Occasionally, a paladin becomes a wyrmslayer because of a personal loss or some other tragedy caused by a dragon. However, a wyrmslayer who feels anger or hatred toward dragons must take care to avoid rash acts that endanger her paladin status or the lives of others. She understands the need for careful preparation when battling creatures as powerful as dragons, and applies this principle to other aspects of her life. A wyrmslayer makes plans and contingency plans for everything from everyday adventuring to shopping expeditions.

Skill Choices: Many wyrmslayers take ranks in Ride, since they often ride on mounts to reduce a dragon's speed advantage. Those who tend to parley with evil dragons take ranks in Sense Motive to guard against draconic deceptions. Some also take ranks in Knowledge (arcana), as it covers dragon lore.

Feat Choices: Ranged attack feats such as Point Blank Shot, Far Shot, and Mounted Archery improve a wyrmslayer's ability to fight a dragon from a distance. Mounted charge attacks become feasible if she rides a flying mount, and Ride-By Attack and Spirited Charge increase their effectiveness. In particular, Ride-By Attack allows her to attack and safely move out of a dragon's reach, forcing it to move and only make a single attack. Spring Attack works similarly but less effectively, as it requires a greater investment of feats and limits the wyrmslayer to her own speed. Lightning Reflexes helps reduce the potential effectiveness of a dragon's breath weapon.

Equipment: Wyrmslayers should invest in a good ranged weapon as a dragon's speed and ability to fly sometimes make melee attacks impossible. Against dragons of up to Large size, wyrmslayers often use bolas to make ranged trip attacks and tanglefoot bags to slow them down and make them unable to fly. See "Rules of the Game: All About Movement," on the D&D website (**wizards.com/dnd**), for rules about tripping flying creatures. Naturally, wyrmslayers try to obtain magic weapons with the dragon bane property as soon as possible.

Combat Tips: All but the smallest dragons can make devastating full-attack actions. When fighting larger dragons, wyrmslayers avoid remaining within reach after attacking them, if at all possible (see Feat Choices). When feasible, they use skirmish tactics, closing to make melee attacks and retreating before the dragon can respond. Otherwise, they wear down their opponents with ranged attacks before entering melee and using their ability to smite evil.

Special Mount: Most wyrmslayers call for a flying mount, such as a dire bat, giant eagle, giant owl, griffin, hippogriff, or pegasus, in order to engage dragons in the air.

Prestige Classes: Wyrmslayers make natural candidates for a wide variety of prestige classes. Besides the dragon-hunting prestige classes in the *Draconomicon*, the cavalier and knight protector from *Complete Warrior* and the highland stalker and wild plains outrider from *Complete Adventurer* provide a host of abilities useful to wyrmslayer paladins.

TWEAKING THE RULES

With your DM's permission, you might consider making the following changes to emphasize a wyrmslayer paladin's special characteristics:

Class Skills: Replace Knowledge (nobility and royalty) with Knowledge (arcana).

Multiclassing: A wyrmslayer paladin may multiclass freely in the ranger class, provided she selects dragons as her first favored enemy.

Resist Energy (Sp): Replace the ability to *remove disease* with the ability to cast *resist energy* 1/day with a caster level equal to your paladin level. Whenever you would gain an additional use of *remove disease* you instead gain an additional use of *resist energy*.

by Tim Hitchcock

TROPHY HUNTING

RANGER

Everybody wants a little something out of life. Kings take taxes, clerics take tithes, lords take land, and hunters take trophies. A ranger can benefit from displaying the tokens of his grisly work as a display of his power and strength, using it to inspire fear and awe in his prey.

TROPHY HUNTER [GENERAL]

You have turned the destruction of your favored enemy into a ritual act, gaining additional powers against those you hunt through the display or consumption of body parts.

Prerequisite: Favored enemy ability.

Benefit: Choose one of your favored enemies and one of the following trophies. You can use the chosen body part of a chosen favored enemy that you personally kill to temporarily increase your favored enemy abilities against other members of the chosen favored enemy's type. The benefits you gain depend on the part of the body you utilize. The body part to be used may be preserved with a *gentle repose* spell (extending its viability for as long as that spell's duration), but nonmagical attempts to preserve it ruin it for the purpose of using this feat. All benefits are supernatural mind-affecting effects.

Head: Carrying and openly displaying a severed head of one of your favored enemies allows you to add Intimidate to the list of skills that benefit from your favored enemy ability with an additional +1 morale bonus on the check for each head beyond the first. You can gain this bonus from a maximum of five heads (+4 bonus total). A head lasts for seven days before it begins to rot beyond effectiveness.

Heart: You can consume the strength of a fallen favored enemy by eating its heart. This requires 1 minute and a Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1/2 HD + Con modifer). In most cases, failure simply means that no benefit comes from eating the heart, although in the case of alien or unnatural creatures it produces additional side effects as noted in the Side Effects sidebar. Creatures without discernable anatomies (such as constructs, oozes, and plants) and undead do not possess viable hearts.

A single heart grants you a temporary +2 morale bonus on attack rolls made against your favored enemy for 10 minutes per Hit Die of the creature. Eating additional hearts prolongs the duration of the effect by 5 minutes per Hit Die (up to a maximum of 4 hours), although it does not increase the morale bonus. Hearts must be consumed within 10 minutes of the creature's death.

Token: You fashion crude jewelry from the bones, eyes, or teeth of your favored enemy. Doing so requires 1 hour and a DC 15 Survival check. Wearing such tokens strengthens your resolve, granting you a +2 morale bonus on Fortitude saves made against spell-like and supernatural attacks of your favored enemy. The token takes up the necklace slot. The token remains effective for a number of days equal to one-half the amount your Survival check exceeded the DC (minimum 1 day).

Pelt (scalp or hide): The pelt of a favored enemy grants you a +2 morale bonus on all attacks made against creatures of the same type. This bonus lasts for 24 hours or until the end of your next encounter with at least one creature of the same type. Taking a scalp or cutting off enough recognizable hide requires 5 minutes + 5 minutes per size category above Medium.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat, you may choose a new trophy and a new favored enemy to apply all your trophy types to.

SIDE EFFECTS

If you fail your Fortitude save when consuming the heart of one of the following creatures, you suffer the listed side effect.

Favored Enemy Type	Side Effect
Aberration, magical beast, monstrous humanoid	Nauseated 1 round/3 HD of creature.
Dragon	Sickened 1 round/2 HD of creature.
Outsider	Damage of 1 hp/HD of creature.

by Hal Maclean

THAT WHICH DOES NOT KILL, PART I

ROGUE

Call it fate, divine providence, or maybe just dumb luck, but occasionally the Grim Reaper plays favorites. Most people simply accept these brushes with eternity and get on with their lives. Others, however, find themselves forever changed. Haunted by the question of why they lived when others died, they set out to find answers. Often, while ferreting out this mystery they discover secrets about themselves, like hidden talents or even supernatural favor. Rogues can take these abilities in place of one of the special abilities outlined on page 50 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Look for part two of this two-part series in DRAGON #334.

Accurate Fall (Ex): *Prerequisite:* Must have survived taking 20d6 points of damage from falling.

Dancing upon currents and eddies in the air the rogue may aim where she falls, often managing to land in just the right spot to minimize injury. Whenever the rogue falls she may attempt a Reflex save to convert half the damage from the fall into nonlethal damage. The DC of the save depends upon the type of surface upon which the rogue falls.

Nature of Surface	Save DC of Reflex
Liquid (water, quicksand)	18
Soft (lava, mud, haystack)	20
Yielding (underbrush, tent canopy)	22
Hard (stone, building roof)	24
Uneven (spikes, stalagmites)	26

The rogue may also make a Tumble check in order to reduce the lethal damage further.

Fear Mirror (Su): *Prerequisite:* Must have succeeded at a Fortitude save to resist *phantasmal killer*.

Having faced and overcome the most terrifying thing she can imagine, the rogue may reflect similar horrors back at her foes. When targeted by a fear effect the rogue instinctively projects the attack back to its source. Both the rogue and the source of the fear effect must make any applicable saving throws to resist the effects of the attack. Any immunities possessed by the source of the attack still apply.

Heart of Stone (Ex): *Prerequisite:* Must have successfully resisted a petrification attack.

A brush with petrification left the rogue's organs stronger and more resilient, offering her protection from certain kinds of injuries. The rogue gains DR 5/—, but only against the extra damage from critical hits and sneak attacks. In addition, the rogue adds her class level to the amount of damage required to trigger a Fortitude save to resist death due to massive damage.

Ice in the Veins (Ex): *Prerequisite:* Must have been reduced to fewer than 0 hit points by a cold attack.

Intense cold brings with it a strange lethargy and somehow, to the detriment of her enemies, the experience lingers within the rogue's bloodstream. Any creature not immune to cold or sleep effects that bites the rogue must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half the rogue's class level + the rogue's Constitution modifier) or become fatigued for 1 round per 2 rogue class levels. Once affected by this ability, further bites extend the duration but do not otherwise stack.

Toxic blood (Ex): *Prerequisite:* Constitution must have been reduced below 3 by poison.

A permanent residue of poison courses through the rogue's veins. Any creature not immune to poison that bites the rogue must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half the rogue's class level + the rogue's Constitution modifier) or immediately take 1 point of Constitution damage. Once triggered, this ability does not function again for 1 hour.

by Johnny O'Neal

CLAIM YOUR BIRTHRIGHT

SORCERER

The silver-haired ice mage and the black-eyed scoundrel with a knack for corrosive spells belong to a unique breed of sorcerers. Their personalities, physical traits, and the spells at which they excel reflect their draconic heritages.

These sorcerers explore the roots of sorcery and develop alternative class features based on the nature of their draconic ancestors. If the sorcerer gains draconic ray, he must choose a specific ancestral dragon kind from among the various breeds of chromatic and metallic dragons. The sorcerer must select his ancestral dragon kind when he acquires his first level in sorcerer. Once chosen, he may not change it later. A sorcerer who selects this alternative class feature permanently gives up the ability to obtain a familiar. Since this is an optional rule, you must check with your DM before selecting draconic ray in place of a familiar.

If you take draconic ray and the Draconic Heritage feat described in *Complete Arcane*, you must choose the same dragon kind for both.

DRACONIC RAY (SU)

The sorcerer can, once per day, fire a ray as a spell-like ability. Using this ray requires a successful ranged touch attack. A creature struck by such a ray takes 1d4 points of damage + 1 per sorcerer level of an energy type appropriate to the sorcerer's chosen dragon ancestor kind (see the Draconic Heritage sidebar). In addition, the creature struck by the ray must make a saving throw of the appropriate type (DC 10 + 1 per 2 sorcerer levels + Charisma modifier) or also be affected by the ray's secondary effect. Each ray has a range of 25 feet + 5 feet per 2 sorcerer levels. The type of energy damage dealt and the ray's secondary effect depends on the chosen ancestor dragon. The caster level for secondary effects equals half the character's sorcerer levels.

Burning: The target catches on fire (see page 303 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) unless it succeeds at a Reflex save. This deals 1d4 points of damage per round for 1 round per 2 sorcerer levels.

Command: The target is affected by the *command* spell unless it succeeds at a Will save.

Dehydration: The target is dehydrated and must succeed at a Fort save or take an additional 1d4 points of nonlethal damage per 2 sorcerer levels.

Fear: The target becomes panicked for 1d4 rounds unless it succeeds at a Will save.

Hold Person: The target is held, as *hold person*, for 1d4 rounds unless it succeeds at a Will save.

Rime of Ice: The target is covered in a rime of ice that lasts 1 round. If the target fails on a Reflex save it drops whatever it is holding and falls prone.

Shadow Eyes: Shadows shroud the target's eyes for 1d6 rounds, causing everything to have concealment in relation to the target (a 20% miss chance). Creatures with blindsight or other abilities to perceive their surroundings without using their eyes can ignore this effect.

Sleep: The target falls asleep for 1d6 rounds unless it succeeds at a Will save.

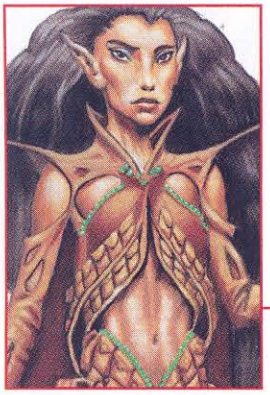
Slow: The target is *slowed* for 1d6 rounds unless it succeeds at a Fortitude save.

Weakening: The target takes a 1d4 penalty to Strength unless it succeeds at a Fort save. This penalty lasts for 1 round per two sorcerer levels of the sorcerer.

DRACONIC HERITAGE

Ancestor Dragon	Energy Type	Secondary Effect	Saving Throw
Black	Acid	Shadow eyes	Will
Blue	Electricity	Dehydration	Fort
Green	Acid	Command	Will
Red	Fire	Burning	Reflex
White	Cold	Rime of ice	Reflex
Brass	Fire	Sleep	Will
Bronze	Electricity	Fear	Will
Copper	Acid	Slow	Fort
Gold	Fire	Weakening	Fort
Silver	Cold	Hold person	Will

by Tim Hitchcock



ALTERNATIVE SPELLBOOKS

WIZARD

The wizard's signature tool is his spellbook. It represents the sum of his arcane knowledge, precariously bound into frail pages that deservedly require both secrecy and protection. When on the road, most wizards prudently make scrolls or traveling spellbooks rather than jeopardizing their prized tomes. However, even the loss of these less significant items might prove fatal on a long journey. Thus, rather than face a disadvantage, pragmatic wizards created methods of crafting more durable and portable spellbooks. Under the right circumstances each of the following alternatives provides a definite advantage over cumbersome dusty tomes.

Except as noted, the rules and costs for creating an alternative spellbook are identical to those for creating a normal one. The major exception is that a wizard requires 2 hours instead of 1 to prepare spells from an alternative spellbook.

BRAIDS OR WEAVES

Braids and weaves are made by twisting twine, leather, hair, or filigree into complex arcane patterns that simulate the esoteric workings of magic and the universe. The full presentation of how the caster displays these items depends upon the caster's culture, aesthetic, and practicality. Some wizards braid spell patterns into their own hair, while others work them into belts, shawls, whips, or similar items. Regardless, weaves can only store a limited amount of knowledge. 24 inches of quarter-inch-thick braid only holds one written page's worth of spell information. Braids and weaves eventually pull loose and wear out. Creating a braid or weave that lasts for one week requires a DC 10 Craft (braiding), Craft (weaving), or Use Rope check. A braid or weave lasts one additional week per 5 points of the creator's Craft or Rope Use skill check above the DC.

CARVINGS

Some wizards forgo printed texts by carving their spellbook into a solid object such as a staff, a piece of jewelry, or wooden shield. Carved items tend to be more durable and often act as jewelry. Like other alternative spellbooks, such items have limited space. A small item, such as a necklace or bracelet, can hold no more arcane information than a single spellbook page. A larger item, such as a staff or shield, can hold between four and six pages (assume roughly one page per pound of weight).

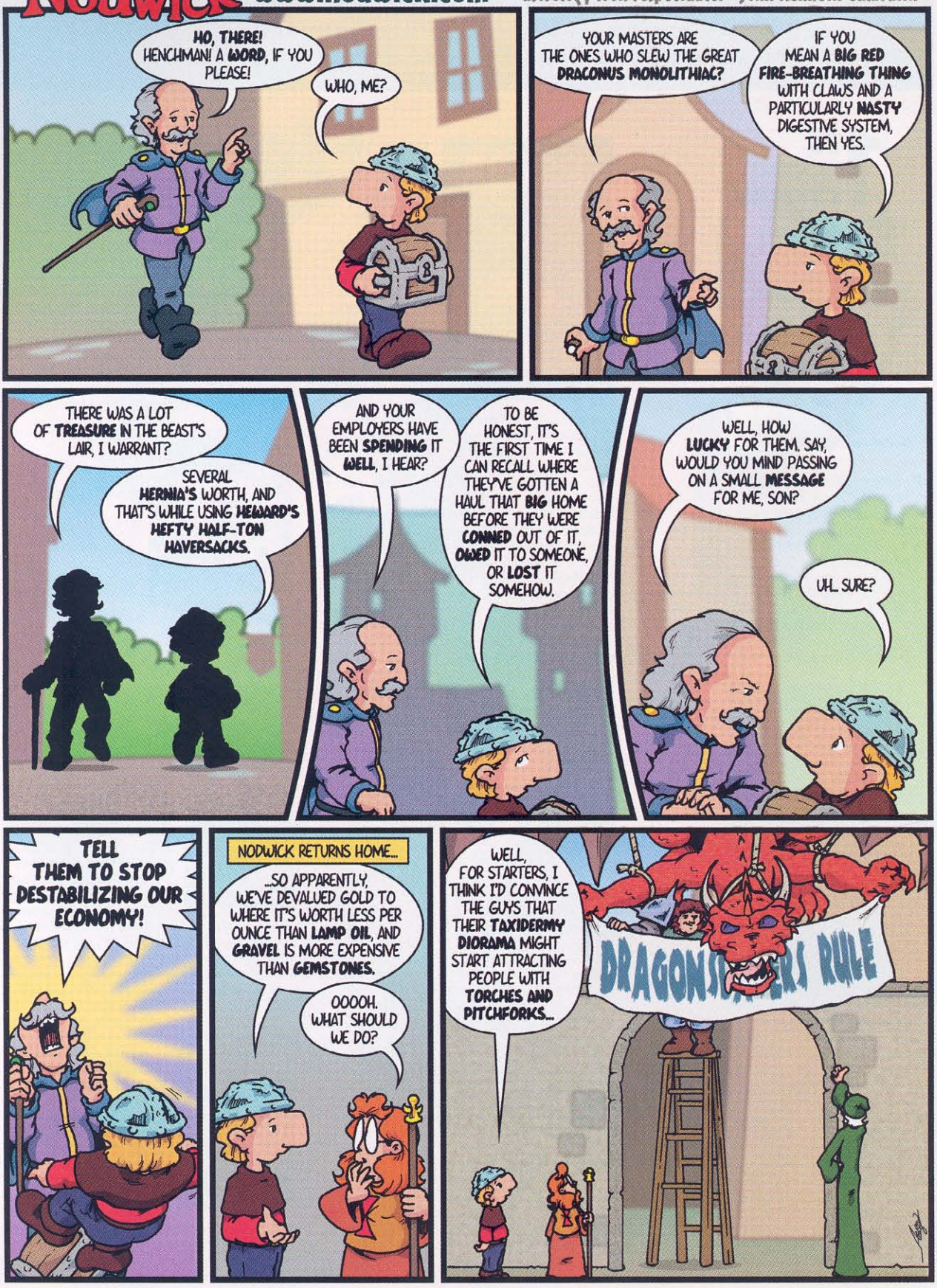
TATTOOS

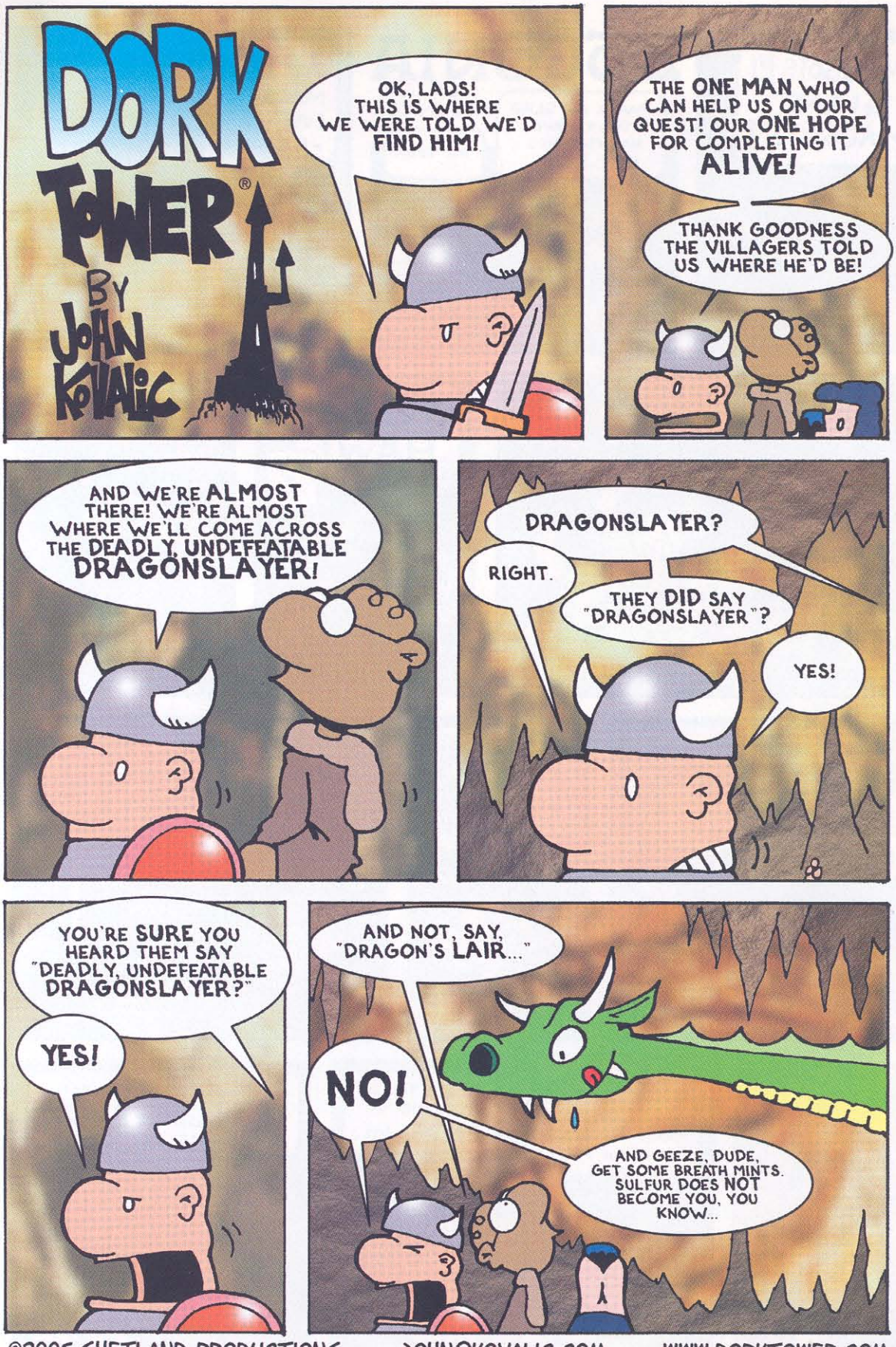
One of the most effective ways of carrying arcane knowledge is as tattoos on one's body. As such, only a great amount of effort can remove it from the wizard's skin. Waterproof and easy to conceal, wizards can sneak such a spellbook around nearly anywhere. Because of their permanency, spell tattoos work best for spells that have many applications or that the caster considers her signature spells. Spell tattoos have their flaws, of course. A Medium creature only has enough visibly readable body space to record twelve written pages worth of spells, while a Small creature can only store eight pages on her body. Depending on the visibility of your tattoos, other casters might have the opportunity to read your spellbook and determine the nature of your powers. If you fail your Spellcraft check to scribe the spell you lose an amount of available body space equal to the spell level of the attempted tattoo. The failed spell takes up that space, and it can only be removed with a successful *erase* spell cast by a higher-level caster than you. A successfully scribed spell can be removed in the same manner.

Nodwick

by Aaron Williams
www.nodwick.com

The only function of economic forecasting is to make astrology look respectable. - John Kenneth Galbraith


HO, THERE! HENCHMAN! A WORD, IF YOU PLEASE!
WHO, ME?
YOUR MASTERS ARE THE ONES WHO SLEW THE GREAT DRACONUS MONOLITHIAC?
IF YOU MEAN A BIG RED FIRE-BREATHING THING WITH CLAWS AND A PARTICULARLY NASTY DIGESTIVE SYSTEM, THEN YES.
THERE WAS A LOT OF TREASURE IN THE BEAST'S LAIR, I WARRANT?
SEVERAL HERNIA'S WORTH, AND THAT'S WHILE USING HEWARD'S HEFTY HALF-TON HAVERSACKS.
AND YOUR EMPLOYERS HAVE BEEN SPENDING IT WELL, I HEAR?
TO BE HONEST, IT'S THE FIRST TIME I CAN RECALL WHERE THEY'VE GOTTEN A HAUL THAT BIG HOME BEFORE THEY WERE CONNED OUT OF IT, OWED IT TO SOMEONE, OR LOST IT SOMEHOW.
WELL, HOW LUCKY FOR THEM. SAY, WOULD YOU MIND PASSING ON A SMALL MESSAGE FOR ME, SON?
UH. SURE?
TELL THEM TO STOP DESTABILIZING OUR ECONOMY!
NODWICK RETURNS HOME...
...SO APPARENTLY, WE'VE DEVALUED GOLD TO WHERE IT'S WORTH LESS PER OUNCE THAN LAMP OIL, AND GRAVEL IS MORE EXPENSIVE THAN GEMSTONES.
OOOOH. WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
WELL, FOR STARTERS, I THINK I'D CONVINCE THE GUYS THAT THEIR TAXIDERMY DIORAMA MIGHT START ATTRACTING PEOPLE WITH TORCHES AND PITCHFORKS...
DRAGONSLAYERS RULE


DORK TOWER®
BY JOHN KOVALIC
OK, LADS! THIS IS WHERE WE WERE TOLD WE'D FIND HIM!
THE ONE MAN WHO CAN HELP US ON OUR QUEST! OUR ONE HOPE FOR COMPLETING IT ALIVE!
THANK GOODNESS THE VILLAGERS TOLD US WHERE HE'D BE!
AND WE'RE ALMOST THERE! WE'RE ALMOST WHERE WE'LL COME ACROSS THE DEADLY, UNDEFEATABLE DRAGONSLAYER!
DRAGONSLAYER?
RIGHT.
THEY DID SAY "DRAGONSLAYER"?
YES!
YOU'RE SURE YOU HEARD THEM SAY "DEADLY, UNDEFEATABLE DRAGONSLAYER?"
YES!
AND NOT, SAY, "DRAGON'S LAIR..."
NO!
AND GEEZE, DUDE, GET SOME BREATH MINTS. SULFUR DOES NOT BECOME YOU, YOU KNOW...

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ZOGONIA
BY TONYM
MAGGOTS!!! GIANT MAGGOTS!
MAN, I AM GLAD I DON'T HAVE NIGHTMARES LIKE KEV.
ME TOO.
AEIII!! MAGGOTS EVERYWHERE! *GGNNK*
WANT ME TO WAKE HIM UP?
SURE.
YEEEE-HAW!
?
TINAK
GLOP!
LESS THAN A MINUTE LATER...
THAT'S THE LAST OF 'EM!
ARE YOU BADLY INJURED?
WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG?! I WAS YELLIN' MY FRIKKIN LUNGS OUT!
YOUR SCREAMS WERE SO HIGH-PITCHED AND PATHETIC, I ASSUMED YOU WERE HAVING A NIGHTMARE! MIGHT I OFFER SOME ADVICE? THE NEXT TIME YOU CALL FOR HELP, TRY SOUNDING A LOT LESS TERRIFIED.
IF THAT'S POSSIBLE FOR YOU.
2 ROOMS LATER...
AHEM! FELLOW PARTY MEMBERS DOWN THE HALL?
A BIG YELLOW PYRAMID IS EATING ME.
TONYM ©2005
DO YOU THINK I'VE GOT TIME TO FINISH POLISHING MY BOOTS?
YEH, SOUNDS LIKE.
TONY MOSELEY © 2005 WWW.ZOGONIA.COM